

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Bright Angel Trail
Other Name/Site Number: Bright Angel Toll Trail; Cameron Trail

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Grand Canyon National Park
City/Town: Grand Canyon Village
State: Arizona County: Coconino Code: AZ005

Not for publication:
Vicinity: X
Zip Code: 86023

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

I hereby certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

**5. CLASSIFICATION**

Ownership of Property

Private: \_\_\_  
Public-Local: \_\_\_  
Public-State: \_\_\_  
Public-Federal: X

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_  
Site: \_\_\_  
Structure: X  
Object: \_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing  
8  
2  
5  
15

Noncontributing  
7 buildings  
1 sites  
structures  
objects  
8 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Roads and Trails of Grand Canyon Arizona

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Recreation and Culture  
Transportation  
Current: Recreation and Culture  
Transportation

Sub: Outdoor Recreation  
Pedestrian Related  
Sub: Outdoor Recreation  
Pedestrian Related

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Other: stone and earth trail

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Earth  
Walls: N/A  
Roof: N/A  
Other: Stone rubble

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

More than any other Grand Canyon trail, the Bright Angel reflects a series of major reconstructions such that today's trail hardly resembles that constructed by Pete Berry, Ralph Cameron, and others in 1890-91. In the late historic period, the National Park Service reconstructed nearly the entire length of the trail and changed the route in several segments to follow adjacent drainages. The version of the trail completed in the 1930s is the one nominated for the National Register; however, the original trail, constructed during the above years and serving through the late 1920s, is also described, as the more significant events of the identified historic contexts occurred during this earlier period of use.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 2Native American Trail

Hunter-gatherers, Cohoninas, Anasazis, and Havasupais used the route that traced the Bright Angel Fault for millennia before the first European-Americans visited Grand Canyon. Abundant archeological evidence and a few historical accounts attest to this early use. Mallery's Grotto, a cliff face just beneath the rim and west of Kolb Studio near today's trailhead, contains hematite pictographs representing successful hunts and may very well have served as an approximate prehistoric trailhead. Another set of pictographs found on a large boulder approximately two miles below the rim along today's trail is clearly visible from the plateau at Indian Garden and may have served as a route marker along an earlier Indian path. Some of the first European Americans in the area in 1890 noted decayed ladders of Douglas Fir beneath the Redwall formation and within the Coconino formation near today's second tunnel, suggesting a specific trail or preferred route through these cliff-forming geologic layers. These bits of physical evidence are insufficient to establish the exact route of an early trail; however, they suggest one of the more formal Native American travel paths found today within Grand Canyon National Park.

Early Historic Trail

The first European Americans living along the Bright Angel Fault mimicked the resource exploitation of the Havasupais in the area when they constructed a trail from the south rim of the canyon to the Tonto Platform at Indian Garden to access mining claims. Near the end of December 1890, Pete Berry, Niles Cameron, Robert A. Ferguson, Curtis H. McClure, and Millard G. Love made camp on the south rim above the fault and began construction to the springs and claims below. They completed the trail to Indian Garden within two months at a cost of \$500. In January 1891, Pete Berry and Niles Cameron measured the new trail with a steel tape, and in February of that year, Berry recorded it with Yavapai County as the "Bright Angel Toll Road."

This initial version of the Bright Angel Trail began to the east of Mallery's Grotto and west of the later Kolb Studio in the Kaibab formation and descended in steep switchbacks through the break immediately east of today's first tunnel. The exact location of a specific trailhead is difficult to determine since the trail was extensively modified even before the turn of the century, and the initial trail through the Kaibab and Toroweap formations was deliberately obliterated by the CCC in the 1930s, but traces of the trail and two rusted supporting bolts through the Kaibab break confirm the initial descent. A photograph taken in 1932 after the Park Service's reconstruction (Figure 1) further identifies the earlier version of the trail through this break and the Coconino break below, descending steeply (up to 40 percent grades) in sharp switchbacks to a point just east of today's second tunnel. From this point the trail crossed to the west of the fault drainage, then back east immediately above the Redwall limestone. Here the trail descended sharply along "Jacob's Ladder," a segment described by George Wharton James in 1910:

*Here steps have been cut in the slippery and solid rocks, in some places built up with timbers, and thus made perfectly safe. It is customary for everyone to dismount here, so as to lighten the load.*

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Jacob's Ladder was built by benching out a narrow trail from the sheer cliffs, installing retaining walls on the outer side, and inserting wooden ties to serve as tread. Once below the Redwall, the trail followed the "Boulder Bed," an indication that the trail at the turn of the century ran through or more closely followed the drainage to Indian Garden than it does today.

Although Berry filed on a trail that continued to the mouth of Pipe Creek on the Colorado River in 1891, there is no indication that he and his partners spent much time improving the trail beyond Indian Garden. The trail segment from the garden to the mouth of Pipe Creek was improved, however, during the winter of 1898-1899 by Curtis McClure, John R. Holford, D.W. Barter, and Niles Cameron, ostensibly to access mining claims on the north side of the river but more likely to accommodate incipient tourist travel. It picked up from the terminus of the earlier trail segment and followed, approximately, today's Tonto Trail proceeding to the east along the Tonto Platform to a point just west of where the Tonto Trail dips down into the first drainage (called Salt Creek in those days). It then headed north to descend gradually into this drainage along its west slope, crossed the drainage to its eastern slope near the secondary drainage which enters from the east (salty deposits), and continued along this eastern slope to cross today's trail near the top of the Vishnu Schist. Since the CCC did not try to erase this trail segment in their work of the 1930s, this early portion of the trail from the top of the former Salt Creek to its intersection with today's trail is extant and easy to follow except where it crosses the creek. Phone poles of the 1935 Grand Canyon telephone system roughly follow this trail segment.

The early trail continued a short distance along the east side of the knoll just east of this drainage and south of today's trail, then turned generally east to descend a talus slope in what was infamously known as the "Devil's Corkscrew," a series of tight, steep switchbacks that ended at Pipe Creek immediately south of the prominent mining adit along today's trail. Photographs of the period show that tourists had to dismount and walk their saddle animals down this harrowing set of switchbacks. This trail segment parallels the 1935 telephone poles as far as the top of the corkscrew, and can be followed with some difficulty down to Pipe Creek. From this point the trail simply ran along and through the creek to its mouth at the Colorado River.

A few writers suggest that the trail from the rim to Indian Garden fell into disrepair during the 1890s, an impression later railroad interests hoped to press in their attempts to gain control of the trail after 1901. At least two contemporary witnesses -- John Hance and Martin Buggeln -- supported this assessment. However, the preponderance of testimony in a 1902 lawsuit suggests that the trail was maintained to the standards of the time (which admittedly were none too good). Perhaps the best testimony to its condition is the fact that Sanford Rowe led tourists down the trail beginning in 1892 and continued to do so through the 1890s. A local contemporary, John Woods, testified that the trail was maintained in "excellent" condition to accommodate Rowe's tourists. Pete Berry, Ralph Cameron, and others also testified that they did work on the trail every year from 1891 through 1901.

In the spring of 1898, Lombard, Goode, and Company, in cooperation with William O. "Bucky" O'Neil, made some improvements to "Cameron's Trail," as it was then commonly known, including a change to the trailhead and first couple hundred feet of trail, some route changes to reduce gradients, and rubble clearing. An estimated \$200 was spent on this effort, so alterations could not have been major. In that same year, Ralph Cameron, a partner in the trail with Berry and others, realized the tourism potential of the approaching railroad line and

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invested a considerable amount of money making trail improvements. Varied estimates of the value of trail work between 1898-1903 range as high as \$13,000, though the exact nature of the work is unknown. Of this amount, \$3,500 was spent on trail work between Indian Garden and the river during 1902 and 1903.

The two tunnels located along the upper segment of the Bright Angel Trail through which today's trail passes were likely built by Ralph Cameron prior to 1913, but neither originally figured in the earliest versions of the trail. Cameron probably constructed the upper tunnel to allow tourist access to Mallery's Grotto, but as already mentioned, the trail itself passed through the break in the Kaibab east of this point. Park Engineer C.M. Carrel suggested in 1932 that the Park Service "shot through" this seventeen-foot tunnel to reroute the trail, perhaps indicating that Cameron's tunnel access to the pictographs was small and not worth noting. Farther down, Cameron's earliest trail segment passed near the lower tunnel's location, but some time before 1913 Cameron built the tunnel and rerouted the trail through it. Art Metzger, an early Canyon resident, recalled in 1972 that both tunnels were built "probably around 1906 to 1908" and were definitely in place by 1913.

Nominated Trail

Further modifications to the Bright Angel Trail awaited the outcome of intense legal and political battles over Ralph Cameron's control of the trail, which resulted in deeding of the trail to the federal government on May 22, 1928. Between November 1929 and June 1939, the National Park Service entirely reconstructed the trail in three separate projects, completing the last segment along Pipe Creek on June 14, 1939. During these same years, support structures along the trail -- including the trail shelters at 1.5-mile, 3-mile, Indian Garden, and the mouth of Pipe Creek -- were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. This entirely new trail, completed in 1939, is the nominated trail; adjacent structures completed by 1942, extant today and applicable to the historic contexts, are considered contributing structures.

During the summer of 1929, Park Superintendent M.R. Tillotson and Park Engineer C.M. Carrel allocated \$20,000 to begin reconstruction of the Bright Angel Trail to specifications consistent with the recently completed South Kaibab Trail. Work began on November 11, 1929, eighteen hundred feet south of Indian Garden at a point where the earlier trail started up to the Tonto Platform and just before Garden Creek enters Tapeats Narrows. A mess hall and camp were established at the project's starting point, and a crew of less than ten men and one foreman worked down through July 13, 1930 along the east and south banks of Garden Creek through Tapeats Narrows. Their work continued across the creek to the top of the Vishnu Schist, thence across the old trail to a slope above Pipe Creek and down in a series of switchbacks -- the new "Devil's Corkscrew" -- to Pipe Creek, approximately fifty yards southeast of the mining adit.

The new trail segment averaged four feet in width and contained grades of less than ten percent to the top of the schist. From the top of the schist to the top of the new corkscrew, blasting was required through the granite, and grades ranged from six to fourteen percent. The corkscrew through the talus slope was built with a uniform gradient of sixteen percent. Small, dry-laid, rubble retaining walls were constructed along the entire length of the new trail segment except for a six-hundred-foot section through lower Indian Garden. Construction costs for the new 1.82-mile trail segment totaled \$18,939.04. Except for the 1,800-foot segment below Indian Garden, the new trail segment entirely bypassed the old trail built by Niles Cameron, et al. in the 1890s.

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Between October 1930 and May 1931, Tillotson and Carrel completed most of the second reconstruction segment from Indian Garden to the rim at Kolb Studio. Thirty thousand dollars was appropriated during this period to set two crews to work from opposite ends. Carrel considered using portions of the existing trail, but rejected the idea due to excessive grades, numerous switchbacks, and poor locations. The completed trail segment contained an average grade of less than thirteen percent with a maximum of seventeen percent. It was built to the standard width of four feet, and required extensive reconstruction of Jacob's Ladder and the upper tunnel as well as a total rerouting along the slopes of the Bright Angel Fault. Loose rock retaining walls and water breaks at the more critical locations were installed, with the expectation that they would be improved at a later time. Upper portions of the new segment were completed after May 1931 by a crew of 20-25 men, mostly Havasupai laborers.

Between 1932 and 1937, the National Park Service oiled the trail several times to keep down the dust, but did not undertake major trail improvements. During this same period, the Civilian Conservation Corps arrived (1933) to help out with trail maintenance and construction, but did not work on the reconstruction of the Bright Angel Trail. They completed several ancillary projects along the trail, however, including obliteration of the top 1-1/2 miles of old trail previously mentioned, and construction of the trail shelters at the three-mile mark (1935), the 1.5-mile mark (1936), the Pipe Creek-Colorado River junction (1936), and Indian Garden (1937). These four structures (Figures 4-7), known respectively as Mile-and-A-Half House, Three-Mile House, River Rest House and the Indian Garden Rest House, are also considered contributing structures to this nomination.

On February 1, 1938, crews went to work reconstructing the third and last segment of the Bright Angel Trail from the base of the new Devil's Corkscrew to the junction of the recently completed Colorado River Trail at the mouth of Pipe Creek. To avoid the creek bed where Cameron's trail was constantly washed out and obstructed by floods, an NPS trail crew averaging nine men constructed a standard trail, four feet wide with an outer stone curb and natural tread surface, the entire length of Pipe Creek. Seventy-five percent of this segment was carved in the granite cliffs above flood level. Six hundred eighty feet of two-inch diameter pipe and 1,800 feet of 1-1/4" diameter pipe were laid along the trail from upper Pipe Creek to supply drinking water to two fountains along the way. A corral and comfort station were moved and reconstructed nearer the river as well. The entire project cost less than \$20,000 and was completed on June 14, 1939. This date represents the completion of the nominated Bright Angel Trail. The water fountains are considered contributing structures.

**Indian Garden**

Indian Garden is located 4.5 trail miles below the Bright Angel Trailhead along Garden Creek upon the Tonto Platform. For centuries, Anasazis, Cohoninas, and Havasupais seasonally occupied the site for its perennial springs, level lands suitable for agriculture, and nearby sheltering caves. By 1903, Ralph Cameron apparently had come to some agreement with Havasupais still living at the site that allowed him to establish a camp for tourists. He also purchased William Ashurst's water rights (Ashurst had filed the claim in 1890) and filed several mining claims of his own to secure the site. In 1903, "Cameron's Indian Garden Camp" offered seven tent cabins, meals, and a phone line to the south rim. Within the next few years he planted cottonwood trees, dammed the creek to irrigate a garden and orchard, constructed several buildings, and otherwise offered tourists a pleasant overnight stay within the Canyon.

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A Working Plan map of 1917 (Figure 8) pictured the extent of Cameron's development in that year, which included a kitchen, root cellar, rain gauge, incinerator, tool shed, fields and gardens, laundry, toilets, and water supplies. Farther north, at the junction of today's Bright Angel and Tonto Trails, Cameron's caretaker tent rested upon a stacked-stone foundation (Figure 9) with the Kolb Brothers' photographic studio nearby. Cameron's development of Indian Garden likely peaked by 1910-15, and then began to deteriorate, since an eyewitness assessment of the site in 1917 labeled it as both filthy and disgraceful. By the early 1920s, Garden Creek was seriously polluted, trash littered the area, and the tattered remains of the tent cabins fluttered in the breeze. This was the sight that greeted the National Park Service when they finally assumed complete control of the site in September 1927. They immediately removed the litter and tent cabin ruins and installed chemical toilets, but did little else for the next several years.

In 1931 the Santa Fe began construction of a water system at Indian Garden to supply water to the south rim. They installed a cable tramway from the rim to a mile above the garden and brought a five-ton tractor down to facilitate construction. The company removed the tram in 1932, but one foundation can still be seen fifty yards northeast of the Three-Mile House (Figure 10). The water system's two pump houses and reservoir (#s 20, 31, and 32, keyed to Figure 11; see also Figure 12) were built of native stone to fit in with the environment. The Santa Fe built a pump caretaker's residence in 1936, but it burned in 1942 and was rebuilt on the same spot in 1943 (Figure 13).

When the CCC arrived at Grand Canyon in 1933, the park service undertook further cleanup work and constructed several new structures at Indian Garden. Crews completed the two-room stone and wood frame Caretaker's Cabin (#93), in October 1932. They also removed Cameron's 1906 stone building -- using the stones to build the Caretaker's Cabin -- and three of Cameron's wood frame buildings. In 1937 CCC crews built the Indian Garden trailside shelter (#143; Figure 14) and a mule barn with corral (#172; Figure 15). The barn, constructed within the floodplain of Garden Creek, was removed and replaced with a new structure (#B470) in 1971.

The National Park Service put up a number of new structures at Indian Garden in the 1960s and 1980s, including a bunkhouse (B473, now gone), a comfort station (#309, now used for storage), a new pump house (#484; Figure 16), and a complex of ranger buildings directly south of Indian Garden and west of Garden Creek. The Ranger Station (#93) received extensive remodeling, including the addition of two rooms on the west side that required removal of the corner stone piers.

Only a few mining adits, aging cottonwood trees, the trail maintainer's tent foundations, and a storage room beneath a boulder remain to remind us of Ralph Cameron's tenure at Indian Garden. A number of structures built during the later historic period remain, however, and are considered contributing structures within this nomination. Descriptions of these buildings follow.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   7   Page   7  **Ranger Station - Building 93**

The former Ranger Station is a small, gable-roofed building erected in 1932 by the National Park Service concurrent with railway development of pumping facilities at Indian Garden. It originally consisted of a kitchen and bedroom with a closet and bathroom, but in the 1960s a two-room wing was added to the rear of the west side, giving the building a T shape. The front of the building has two massive stone corner piers that, along with the exposed frame construction, give the structure its rustic appearance. The building sits on a stone foundation. The stone used in the building was salvaged from a roofless stone structure built at Indian Garden sometime before 1906 (possibly by Dan Hogan and others in 1890-91). The building now serves as a search and rescue cache and not much else.

**Rock Residence - Building 18**

The Rock Residence, known variously as the Rock House, the Caretaker's Residence, the Pump tender's Residence, and NPS Quarters, was built in 1942 by the AT&SF Railway as the water system caretaker's residence. It replaced the original pump tender's house, a frame building constructed in 1932, which burned to the ground in 1942. Consequently, this building was constructed to be as fireproof as possible. It is a one-story, two-room building of native stone, with a cement-asbestos covered gable roof. It measures approximately 15' x 22' and was built according to drawing number CECL-89-20938. It was donated to the National Park Service in 1953.

**Rehandling Pumphouse - Building 20**

Built by the AT&SF Railway in 1943 as Building 904, the rehandling pump house is of concrete construction veneered in native stone with a flat roof. It measures 8 x 12 feet and contained two pumps and motors. The old electrical equipment is still in place, though outmoded and no longer used. It has been tested for PCBs and found to be safe. The building is set below the Bright Angel Trail, and is almost encircled by a stone wall 4-5' wide that keeps the water away from the building except during floods.

**Dam**

Near the Rehandling Pumphouse is a submerged concrete dam that contained the water the rehandling pump house pumped up to the main pump house (Building 31). It is approximately 23' 6" long. Its relation to the stone wall surrounding the rehandling pump house is not clear.

**Pumphouse - Building 31**

The pump house was built in 1932 by the AT&SF Railway to pump water up to the south rim. It is 31' 4" by 23' 8" and has a flat, built up roof behind a parapet. It is two stories in height, though it contains only one room. It is concrete with native stone veneer and has a central metal door with a transom. The door is flanked by metal frame windows. This building became known as the South Pumphouse after construction of a supplemental pump house, the North Pumphouse, in 1967. The building stopped functioning when modifications were made to the North Pumphouse in the mid-1980s, but has been preserved in place.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   7   Page   8  **Rock Wall by Pump house**

A stone retaining wall runs along the south side of the (south) pump house and then curves around the corner. It is the height of the pump house window sill at the corner and allows access up to the reservoir. The wall is native stone and represents a conscious design effort; therefore it, too, is considered a contributing structure.

**Reservoir - Building #32**

This round, native stone-veneered concrete reservoir was also built in 1932 by the AT&SF. It is 40 feet in diameter and has a 70,000 gallon capacity. A portion of the tank is underground. The top of the tank is behind a stone parapet. As with the wall, the stone was added in character with rustic architecture.

**Trail Maintainer's Tent Foundation**

The Trail Maintainer's Tent foundation is a rock wall at the junction of the Bright Angel and Tonto Trails.

**Archeological Site B:16:152**

**Location:** 350 meters north of Indian Garden Campground, below the Plateau Point Trail and ca. 25 meters from Garden Creek at an "S" in the trail.

**Description:** The site is a single square masonry room partially built into the northeast-facing slope below the Plateau Point Trail. The structure is a maximum of 5-6 courses high (ca. 50cm) built of yellow-brown stone (possibly Supai) shaped into rectangular blocks. No associated artifacts remain, but since it is so close to the trail, collection seems likely. Also, the vegetation is dense, obscuring the ground. Given the height of the walls, the square block construction, the lack of prehistoric artifacts, and the location, the structure is thought to be historic. Note also that the structure has a doorway. The site was recorded in 1983 and dated to the 1900s based on historic references (GRCA park archeological survey forms).

Structures completed at Indian Garden after 1943 are considered noncontributing properties. The cableway site does not have sufficient integrity and is also considered noncontributing.

Indian Garden itself is considered a contributing site containing the first seven of the contributing properties and all noncontributing properties. Its boundaries are described in Section 10 of this nomination.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   7   Page   9  **Rest Houses**

The four rest houses are similarly designed and constructed in the NPS Rustic Style. All were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. All four were renovated by the park trail crew and other experts in spring and summer 2001.

**Mile-and-a-Half House - Building 141**

A gable-roofed, stone structure built slightly south of the Bright Angel Trail at the base of the Coconino formation, 1-1/2 miles from the rim. Composting toilets located another 50 yards down trail were built in the 1990s. An emergency phone was located within the rest house until 2006, when it was moved outside and slightly down trail. The rest house is in good condition.

**Three-Mile House - Building 142**

A gable-roofed, stone structure built to the same plan as the Mile-and-a-Half House. It is located at the top of the Redwall Limestone at the beginning of Jacob's Ladder, just east of the trail. Farther to the east there is an anchor foundation to the abandoned 1930s cable system. There is a water fountain and an emergency telephone, but no toilet facilities. The rest house is in good condition.

**Indian Garden Rest House - Building 143**

This is a gable-roofed, stone structure, without facilities of any kind. The building was considered unsafe and closed to the public prior to renovations in 2001, when it was reopened.

**River Rest House - Building 144**

The River Rest House, located west of the trail near the confluence of Pipe Spring and the Colorado River, is the most elaborate of the trailside buildings. Structures consists of the rest house, stone patio, barbeque grill, hitching post, and several retaining walls. The rest house itself is a gable-roofed structure set back against the canyon wall. Like the other rest houses, it has a gable roof supported by four piers of large stone. The roof burned in 1956 but was immediately replaced in kind. This shelter also has an emergency telephone. It is surrounded on two sides by a stone patio. The hitching post and water fountain are to the south. The hitching post is simply a U-shaped iron pipe cemented into the ground. The water fountain and grill are made of stone. The grill is built into one of the outside corners of the rest house, but is not used.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   7   Page  10 **Contributing Resources:**Buildings (8)

Indian Garden Trail Shelter (#143, Figure 6)  
1.5-Mile Trail Shelter (Mile and a Half House) (Figure 4)  
3-Mile Trail Shelter (Three Mile House) (Figure 5)  
River Trail Shelter (River Rest House) (Figure 7)  
Caretaker's Cabin (#93, keyed to Figure 13)  
Rock Residence (#18)  
Pump house (#31)  
Rehandling Pump house (#20; Figure 12)

Structures (5)

Bright Angel Trail  
Reservoir (#32)  
Stone Wall  
Dam  
Water Fountains

Sites (2)

Indian Garden  
Trail Maintainer's Tent Foundation (Figure 9)

**Non-contributing Resources:**

All non-contributing resources are located at Indian Garden or in the vicinity.

Cableway Site  
Barn (#B470)  
Comfort Station (#309)  
New Pump house (#484)  
1980s complex:  
    Ranger Station  
    Trail Crew Bunkhouse  
    Pump house Operator's Residence  
    Clinic/laundry building

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**Applicable National  
Register Criteria:A  B  C  D Criteria Considerations  
(Exceptions):A  B  C  D  E  F  G 

Areas of Significance:

Politics/Government  
Conservation  
Entertainment/Recreation  
Transportation

Period(s) of Significance:

1890-1941

Significant Dates:

1890-1891; 1929-1932; 1938-1939

Significant Person(s):

Ralph Cameron

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Pete Berry, et al                      1890-1891  
National Park Service                1929-1939**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

The Bright Angel Trail is significant under Criterion A for its role in the political debate involving public versus private control at Grand Canyon, and western public lands in general. The initial salvos fired in the battle for control of the Grand Canyon came less than a year after the arrival of the Grand Canyon Railway and centered on ownership of the Bright Angel Trail. Although this conflict eventually spread to all developed sections of the Canyon, the most heated debate focused on this one trail through the 1920s, long after most skirmishes in more remote sections of the park had ended.

While the struggle between government, big business, and small private operators raged, the Bright Angel Trail served as a primary avenue for mining and tourism in the developing central section of Grand Canyon. Mining interests at Indian Garden and along the Tonto Platform benefited from (and prompted) construction of the original trail in 1890-1891. For more than a decade it served as the western leg of an early network of trails that included the Tanner, Grandview, and Hance trails, all built to transport mining material and supplies into the Canyon and mules burdened with ore out of the Canyon to the south rim. As prospecting and mineral production declined, the trail's popularity among tourists increased, especially after the railway's arrival in 1901. From that year until construction of the South Kaibab Trail in the 1920s, the Bright Angel accommodated nearly all tourist traffic within the central corridor. Throughout the historic period, the Bright Angel continued to support more tourists than any other park trail.

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The Bright Angel Trail is also significant under Criterion B for its association with Ralph Henry Cameron. Cameron was born in Southport, Maine, in 1863, moved west in 1881, and arrived in Flagstaff with the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad in 1883. An intelligent man with boundless energy, he worked during the 1880s at the local sawmill, as a railroad clerk, as manager and later owner of a merchandise store (sold to the Babbitt brothers in 1889), and as agent for the Haywood Cattle Company. During these same years he ran six thousand sheep on shares and accumulated not only a fair amount of capital for later Grand Canyon investments but also a solid reputation within Yavapai County. Cameron's reputation increased during the 1890s as he helped form Coconino County in 1891 and was appointed the county's first sheriff by the territorial governor.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Cameron developed extensive interests at Grand Canyon's south rim. Along with his brother, Niles, and Pete Berry, Cameron filed on the Last Chance copper claim in 1890 -- one of very few inner-Canyon mines that ever shipped ore and turned a profit. The following year he joined with others to finance construction of the Bright Angel Trail. By the first few years of the twentieth century he controlled approximately 13,000 acres within the Canyon and along its south rim through mining and water claims, establishing the most formidable legal obstacle to federal control.

Legal difficulties would escalate to political debates at the national level as Cameron continued his success in politics. In 1904 his popularity earned his election as Chairman of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, a position he used to fight his battles over Bright Angel Trail control and to garner local public support for his Canyon enterprises. As the U.S. Forest Service and Santa Fe/Fred Harvey alliance gained strength, so too did Cameron with his election as territorial delegate to Congress in 1909.

Cameron's popularity and the Republican landslide of 1920 gave him a seat in the United States Senate in 1921, a position he held until 1927. From this vantage, Cameron raised the issue of public versus private land rights to a new level. He served as an important catalyst in congressional debates over the powers of the fledgling National Park Service through his success at temporarily eliminating park service appropriations from the national budget, an action that rallied congressional leaders to the side of the park service and increased its administrative strength. During his tenure he also influenced Coconino County voters to defeat a measure that would sell the Bright Angel Trail to the federal government, an action that directly prompted construction of the South Kaibab Trail. Consistent with his belief that political power could and should be used to further personal interests, Cameron went so far as to file mining and water claims at the proposed site of Hoover Dam within the Black Canyon of the Colorado River during his senatorial tenure.

Cameron's direct influence on Grand Canyon development came to an end in 1926 when he lost reelection to the Senate. Tired of political and legal losses, he and his family picked up and moved east, where he died in 1952. In his later years, though no longer a powerful political opponent of the federal government, he never budged from his belief that private developmental rights supersede those of any government. He was often noted by newspapers as a political authority on the Grand Canyon for his individual rights stance. Cameron thereby played a major role in the public versus private debate over Grand Canyon control from his arrival in 1890 to his departure in 1926, and influenced public opinion on the subject of federal land control for more than sixty years.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   8   Page   3  Historic Context: Politics, Government, and Conservation, 1890-1928.

Prior to the arrival of the Grand Canyon Railway, no one -- including the federal government -- seemed concerned with the efforts of early mining/tourism entrepreneurs to monopolize Grand Canyon locations favorable to tourist development. No sooner did the first locomotive pull into the Grand Canyon depot, however, than the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe began to question the rights of Ralph Cameron to control of the Bright Angel Trail less than half a mile from the end of the tracks. Over the next twenty-five years, the private duel between one man and a corporation would escalate to far greater dimensions involving county, state, and federal governments and agencies, and end in federal hegemony. This political and legal context has been developed within the multiple property nomination because it entails a number of trails and roads within Grand Canyon, but is more fully developed within this nomination because control of the Bright Angel Trail epitomizes the struggle.

Books and articles written since the turn of the century often picture Ralph Cameron as the bad guy in this debate. There is no doubt that Cameron did tie up the Bright Angel Trail and other Canyon properties through questionable mining claims and held on tenaciously with the help of his political offices. It is also true that the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and Santa Fe/Fred Harvey partnership brought order and needed improvements to the rapid development at South Rim. The debate, however, centered on the perceived rights of an individual at risk to an omnivorous conglomerate, and later to a governmental agency reaching for omnipotence. The question of who is good and who is bad in this type of conflict depends on one's perspective. This history will not answer that question, but attempts a more balanced account than is often given to the question of control of the Bright Angel Trail.

The first question to be addressed is that of initial rights to the Bright Angel Trail within public land laws of 1891, the year that Pete Berry and Niles and Ralph Cameron completed the trail to Indian Garden. Statutes in effect at that time and since 1887 allowed enterprising men willing to risk their own money to build roads and trails through lands not already used for public purposes, and to operate these transportation routes as toll roads for a period of up to fifteen years. In 1891, after an expenditure of two months labor and \$500 cash, Pete Berry and his partners immediately filed on the Bright Angel as a toll road, though contemporary accounts indicate that they did not charge locals for its use throughout the 1890s. Rather, they often entered into reciprocal agreements like that with Sanford Rowe in 1892, whereby Rowe was allowed to lead tourists down the trail and Cameron and others were allowed to use the water available at Rowe Well.

Some two dozen men who maintained or used the trail in the 1890s testified in 1902 and 1903 that the original trail partners were the acknowledged owners of "Cameron's Trail" throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century. A few locals like Bucky O'Neill, John Hance, and Martin Buggeln argued through words or actions that trail ownership was doubtful, but the preponderance of testimony of Cameron's friends as well as others who had nothing to gain by lying indicates that the partners maintained the trail to suit their needs and allowed others to use it at no cost, mainly because at that time usage did not justify the expense of a toll keeper.

In 1901 the original franchise to operate the Bright Angel Trail expired and Pete Berry immediately sought and was granted a five-year extension from Coconino County on January 31 of that year. When it became clear in early 1901 that the Santa Fe planned to complete the railroad line to the south rim, Ralph Cameron quickly

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began to secure total rights to the trail. Soon after Berry extended the franchise, Cameron bought out his interest and that of his other partners (and traded his interest in the Grandview Trail). Between March 1902 and February 1903, he spent five to six thousand dollars on trail reconstruction and maintenance. By the middle of 1903, he had built Cameron's Hotel and Camps at the Bright Angel trailhead--a two-story hotel with adjoining tent cabins--and Cameron's Indian Garden Camp four and a half miles below on the Tonto Platform. His investment in the trail, it seemed, was finally about to pay dividends.

Not content with whatever rights the toll trail might provide, Cameron and his brother Niles began to file mining, mill, and water claims at strategic points along the trail. The brothers filed several claims near the trailhead, including the Copper King before 1901 and the Cape Horn and Golden Eagle in April 1902. Cameron had long ago secured William Ashurst's claims at Indian Garden and had since filed on other water sites in that location. In June 1904 he filed the Magician mining claim and Alder millsite at the base of the Devil's Corkscrew and the Wizard claim and Willow millsite near the mouth of Pipe Creek (the adits of these claims are seen today along the trail). There is no evidence that Cameron ever shipped ore from these claims and the federal government later rejected his attempts to patent the sites, yet liberal mining laws, assays of up to 12 percent copper and other trace metals, and evidence of modest claim improvements would help tie up the locations and the larger trail into the early 1920s. This illegal practice of filing claims for other than mining purposes was common among the early tourist operators well versed in mining law, and much despised by forest service personnel who knew full well why it was done.

As Cameron secured control over the Bright Angel Trail route and prepared for tourist operations, Martin Buggeln and the Santa Fe were equally busy establishing tourist accommodations nearby. In June 1901 Buggeln bought out J.W. Thurber's interests in the Bright Angel Hotel at the south rim. In September 1901 the railroad surveyed its twenty-acre station site allowed by law and soon after built a cabin and added adjacent tents. It became known as Bright Angel Camp, operated in association with the Bright Angel Hotel, which were both managed by Buggeln. The survey and camp may have prompted Cameron to file his Cape Horn and Golden Eagle claims which overlapped the station site the following year, igniting the first of many legal battles between the man and the corporation. The courts later upheld the railroad's twenty-acre station, but allowed Cameron the remainder of his two claims, thus, Cameron and Buggeln operated adjacent competitive tourist businesses at the head of the Bright Angel Trail by the end of 1903.

It was perhaps inevitable that some form of economic warfare would erupt, given Cameron's and Buggeln's competitive natures. The railroad's role, however, was not as immediately clear to those at Grand Canyon. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe had acquired the Atlantic & Pacific by this time, renaming it the Santa Fe Pacific), and also owned the Grand Canyon Railway from Williams to the south rim. It also had a long standing, symbiotic relationship with the Fred Harvey Company, which operated hotels and restaurants owned by the AT&SF Railway throughout the west. As early as May 1902, the railroad's directors planned to build a grand hotel (which Fred Harvey would operate) adjacent to the Buggeln and Cameron Hotels, but found it convenient in the meanwhile to work with Buggeln against Cameron while plans for the El Tovar developed.

Legal battles began tentatively in 1902 with Cameron's claims to the station site and the railroad's challenge to his trail ownership, but the bitterness commenced in April 1903, when Cameron imposed a one dollar toll per animal descending the Bright Angel Trail. Since 1901, Buggeln's wranglers had been leading hundreds of tourists on daily trips, charging three dollars per day per horse and five dollars per day per guide, sharing

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receipts with the railroad, and paying nothing for trail use or maintenance. Cameron's rates were competitive at two dollars per day per horse (including a one dollar toll for his customers) and four dollars per day per guide, but he had to shoulder all trail maintenance costs. Cameron had been itching to impose a toll all along, but prior to 1903, the Department of the Interior had threatened to prosecute anyone who attempted to charge a trail toll. By January of that year, the agency had perhaps checked with legal counsel since it informed Cameron that he had, in fact, legal and exclusive rights to the trail. Cameron wasted no time in erecting a toll gate, and the railroad wasted no time filing the *Territory of Arizona vs. Ralph H. Cameron*.

In this first of many lawsuits, the jury decided that Cameron did not own the trail's franchise (still in Berry's name), and that the franchise could not be transferred. Although the decision forced Cameron to return ownership to Berry, it had little effect on operations since Berry acknowledged Cameron as the real owner. Nor did the decision disqualify Berry from charging tolls. The railroad immediately backed Buggeln with an injunction and another lawsuit filed in May to eliminate the collection of tolls, but in December 1903, the district court ruled in favor of Cameron and Berry. The partners came back with a lawsuit for damages incurred from the seven-month injunction and tried to collect the \$5,000 bond Buggeln and the railroad had posted. The legal war was engaged.

The railroad, perhaps a bit taken aback by a citizen willing to take them to court, appears to have made a move to buy out the Cameron interests at this time. Flagstaff's *Coconino Sun* newspaper reported such negotiations in March 1904, but Cameron denied talking to the railroad about a purchase. Buggeln meanwhile filed another suit in May 1904, claiming that the partnership had never filed a trail plat (untrue, the map is still in the Coconino County Records Office), made no statement of receipts as required by law, and had not paid a two-percent county tax. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled later in the year in favor of the Berry and Cameron.

Elected to the Coconino County Board of Supervisors in 1904, Cameron decided to use his political position to put the railroad on the defensive. In that year, the board initiated a claim that the railroad had never paid its taxes. The county ruled in September 1905 that the railroad indeed should be on the tax rolls and owed back taxes to 1901. The Territorial Board of Equalization (Ralph Henry Cameron, Chairman) determined the railroad's tax to be \$4,500 per mile, or approximately \$300,000 per year for the Canyon spur. The Santa Fe naturally filed a suit contesting the assessment, and filed yet another suit to contest Cameron's claim to the railroad depot, previously mentioned, which resulted in a stalemate.

The year 1906 marked a shift in opposing forces as well as battle strategy over control of the Bright Angel Trail. In that year, Martin Buggeln lost the will to fight and sold his interests, including the Bright Angel Hotel, to the Santa Fe, which had completed the magnificent El Tovar Hotel the year before. Buggeln did not lose his love for the Canyon, however, and in 1907 bought the old Hance place to the east where he ran cattle until his death in 1939. Typical of the power struggle as it developed in later years, the National Park Service would thwart Buggeln's attempts in 1925 to start a small tourist enterprise from his Hance holdings. By that year, he may have had reason to regret that he had broken ranks with his economic class in the early years to side with big business.

With Buggeln out of the picture in 1906 and Fred Harvey entrenched in his stead, the fight for control proceeded with the Santa Fe and Fred Harvey fighting their own battles in the open. Cameron made allies of Coconino County's citizens, newspapers, and Board of Supervisors, as well as (to a lesser extent) the Arizona territorial

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legislature, to help balance the scales. Strategy also shifted as the debate focused on the county's right to operate the trail as a toll road and to decide who would hold the franchise.

The Berry franchise to the Bright Angel Trail expired in January 1906, and the trail nominally reverted to Coconino County. The Board of Supervisors rejected Cameron's attempt to acquire the franchise in his name, but awarded it to Lannes L. Ferrall, who was required to maintain the trail and allowed to keep one hundred percent of the tolls. Cameron lost some measure of control at this point, but not much, since he retained his facilities and mining claims along the trail. More importantly, he could not be too unhappy with the county's choice of tollkeepers, since Ferrall was manager of Cameron Hotel & Camps, and for years thereafter one of Cameron's closest friends. Ferrall's wife, Louisa, happened to be the Grand Canyon postmistress as well, a position she used to keep Cameron abreast of developments while he was out of town.

The Santa Fe no doubt understood the Cameron-Ferrall relationship that retained control of the trail, and immediately tried several end runs to break the stranglehold. First, it requested a permit from the Bureau of Forestry to operate and control the trail, in effect trying to remove the trail from county jurisdiction. The county learned of this request, wrote the Bureau to disregard it, and ordered the county sheriff to protect the trail from outside attempts to control it. When the Bureau refused to issue the permit, the railroad filed suit against the county contesting the validity of Ferrall's contract and claiming the county had no right to operate a toll trail. While this case awaited trial, Cameron adroitly persuaded the Arizona legislature to pass the "Cameron Bill," which confirmed the county's right and allowed Cameron to regain the franchise. Highlighting the emerging political sides in the struggle, the governor--appointed by the federal government--vetoed the bill on advice of the Department of the Interior, and the legislature--elected by the people--overrode the veto.

Angry over the federal government's interference and big business's attempts to dictate law in northern Arizona, the County Board of Supervisors, backed by the Cameron Bill, changed its position in 1907 and smoothed the way for transferring the trail franchise back to Ralph Cameron. Ferrall was understandably amenable to the transfer and Cameron sweetened the deal a little by offering to pay ten percent of toll receipts to the county. Outraged at the proposed transfer, the Santa Fe countered with an offer to operate the trail, provide insurance against trail accidents, and pay seventy percent of receipts to the county. Despite this offer, the board voted on April 17, 1907 to give Cameron a five-year extension to the original franchise. Responding to criticism in the *Williams News* and *Coconino Sun*, board Chairman Jesse Gregg defended the action by stating that the railroad was simply trying to remove control from the county and that the railroad's offer was spurious since Ferrall's contract had nearly four years left to run. Gregg's logic was both thin and inconsistent, but the board's vote assured Cameron's control of the trail through 1912.

The county's franchise transfer did not end the railroad's attempts to chase Cameron out of Grand Canyon. Testimony involving the early suit questioning the county's right to operate a toll road reached the Arizona Supreme Court for the nineteenth time in January 1909, but the court ruled that Cameron had the right to collect tolls. The Santa Fe's strategy had shifted again, however, this time to the validity of Cameron's mining claims along the trail. Testimony before the Arizona land office in 1908 was forwarded to the Department of the Interior, which ruled in February 1909 that Cameron had not developed the mining sites, thus, they reverted to Grand Canyon National Monument. In the meanwhile, the Arizona Supreme Court handed the railroad

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another bit of good news when it ruled that tax assessments on the Grand Canyon Railway could not begin until 1909.

The Department of the Interior's decision in 1909 had little effect on Cameron's operations. Even if the decision were legal and enforced, it could have no effect on the operation of the Bright Angel Trail as a toll road. Niles Cameron, C.C. Spaulding, and Lannes Ferrall continued to collect tolls and run the tourist camps despite the decision, and Niles continued (perhaps at an accelerated pace) to perform regular trail maintenance and assessment work at the mining claims. Meanwhile, the Santa Fe did not try to exploit the decision, but rather, chose to pursue construction of its own road and trail west of the Bright Angel from Grand Canyon Village to Hermit Basin.

In May 1909 District Forester Arthur C. Ringland toured the proposed road and trail route with Santa Fe and Fred Harvey officials, and quickly forwarded a special permit with his endorsement on to Washington. The proposed "Special Use Permit to the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company" represented the federal government's willingness to work with a large corporation to eradicate the smaller, intractable, private operators within public lands, as well as its early willingness to use its own front man (the Santa Fe) to accomplish its bureaucratic aims. The permit specifically gave the Santa Fe control of the Bright Angel Trail--property it had absolutely no right to give--and a right of way for a road and trail to Hermit Basin, a hotel at that location, and several rim drives which, incidentally, would pass over several of Cameron's mining claims. The department's cunning is revealed in the stipulation that the permit was subject to all valid claims, especially those of the county and Cameron, and that federal assistance would not be forthcoming in any legal battles that might (certainly) ensue. The permit was, in fact, a statement of formal alliance between the federal government and the Santa Fe, a blank check for the railroad to construct its own tourist facilities, and a clear invitation for the railroad to continue its legal battles at its own expense.

The special permit exacerbated the bitterness among local residents, including the Camerons, Pete Berry, and William Bass. Ralph Cameron fired off a letter to Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot in August 1909, protesting that the Bright Angel, Grandview, Hance, Boucher, and Bass trails (all properly filed toll trails, it should be noted) were quite enough to service Canyon tourists and that there was no need for a Hermit Trail. Despite Cameron's protests, requests for postponement, notices of trespass, injunctions, and ensuing lawsuit, the railroad moved ahead in 1911 with a macadamized road from Hopi Point through Cameron's claims on the rim, and a trail down to Hermit Basin. They completed the Hermit Trail in 1912, thus opening the first free trail in the vicinity of the emerging Grand Canyon Village.

While the Santa Fe built its trail, the U.S. Forest Service persevered in its attempts to remove small operators and their mining claims from Grand Canyon National Monument. As early as 1908, J.H. Clark, Acting Supervisor of the Kaibab National Forest, complained that

*One thing is certain.... Very few if any of the mining claims located along the Canyon were made for their probable mineral value. There seems to always be some other motive in locating these claims, such as the acquiring of water rights which would be hard to obtain in the regular way.*

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Clark referred to the status of claims within the monument, proclaimed on January 11, 1908. Claims filed after that date would not be recognized, but existing claims already littered the rims and inner canyon, frustrating both the Department of Agriculture's and later Department of the Interior's goals to implement some form of developmental control. Cameron's claims alone amounted to some 13,000 acres, and a mineral inspector out to survey the area near Pete Berry's Grandview Hotel in 1910 correctly noted that "the country was all plastered up with fraudulent mining claims so a person that wants to get anywhere or do anything cannot get any ground."

After 1910 the Santa Fe/Fred Harvey interests backed off from direct resistance to Cameron's control and allowed the federal government to take up the active fight. Since the government no longer contested the county's right to operate a toll trail, it centered its efforts on disproving fraudulent mining claims. Cameron no doubt alarmed park managers when the *Coconino Sun* reported his developmental plans in 1912 and 1913. One article reported that Cameron had sold an option on thirty-five of his claims for \$5,000,000, seven of which were at Indian Garden and the remainder along Pipe Creek. The syndicate purchasing the option (so the story went) had plans for a hydroelectric plant above Pipe Creek to power its mills, and a reservoir that would fill the Tapeats Narrows of Garden Creek. This plan never materialized, but Cameron formed a company of his own in 1912 or 1913, to extract (nonexistent) platinum from some of these claims.

With the burgeoning tourist traffic and increasing pressure in the 1910s for promotion of Grand Canyon to national park status, neither the Department of Agriculture, The Santa Fe Railway, Fred Harvey, nor the general public were anxious to see reservoirs, power plants, and actual mining operations taking place in what had become the central corridor of Grand Canyon tourism. In 1913 the government stepped up its lawsuits in an attempt to have the mining claims declared invalid. Cameron sold some of these properties to the railroad in 1916, but varied lawsuits continued until 1920 when the United States Supreme Court ruled most of his claims illegal and declared Cameron and his associates trespassers in the one-year-old Grand Canyon National Park.

Although the Supreme Court had finally ruled on his claims, the battle over Cameron's presence and control along the Bright Angel Trail was far from over. Still, Cameron's alliance had seriously eroded by 1920. The National Park Service replaced the U.S. Forest Service as Cameron's principal antagonist in 1919, and brought fresh troops and a new enthusiasm to the fray. By this year, most of the old-timers who held the public's support had become just that: old, and no longer interested in carrying on the fight. Pete Berry had bowed out of the struggle in 1913, but not before selling out with malevolent glee to William Randolph Hearst (another story). William Bass still controlled his properties in the western end of the park, but was actively looking for a buyer. John Hance, Sanford Rowe, and Martin Buggeln had retired from active combat. Niles Cameron, one of the more active if little known players in the day-to-day struggle, died in 1918. Of the original mining/tourism entrepreneurs, only Ralph Cameron possessed the vigor to keep fighting.

Cameron's chief allies -- the people and government of Coconino County -- had also come around to the advantages and the necessity of a national park and the order it would bring to the chaos at Grand Canyon Village. Grand Canyon tourism had exploded during the years 1901 through 1920, and the advent of automobile tourism by the latter year threatened any kind of quality experience one might enjoy at the new park. Traffic overtaxed limited roads and trails, sanitation problems proliferated with inadequate housing facilities in the vicinity of the Bright Angel trailhead, and informal camps atop and within the canyon resembled urban

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ghettos. The situation clearly called for stricter management. Cameron had become an anachronism, a single individual with rights but no real solutions to the challenge of increased tourism. The success of the idea he and others had conceived and developed had finally done him in, but after two decades of incessant fighting against larger foes, he did not grasp the larger picture. Ralph Cameron's bitterness became the theme of the 1920-1928 period of Bright Angel history.

After 1920 Cameron carried his personal war against the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service to the United States Senate. His election in that year illustrated his local popularity and remaining influence despite his unpopular stance on Grand Canyon development. In 1922, in a move that can only be described as retribution against old enemies, Cameron succeeded in temporarily removing the National Park Service's woefully inadequate operating funds from the Department of the Interior budget. Fortunately, the Santa Fe and Fred Harvey continued to pour millions into Canyon development in the early 1920s. Meanwhile, in 1923-24, U.S. Attorney General Harlan F. Stone, through special assistant Harold Baxter, finally evicted Cameron's employees from their decaying tourist facilities at Indian Garden. Cameron's last major victory over his foes came in 1924, when he used the final measure of his influence to convince Coconino County voters to reject the federal government's offer to buy the Bright Angel Trail. This action convinced the National Park Service to begin construction on the South Kaibab Trail -- the second major Grand Canyon trail built to circumvent Cameron's interests.

Ralph Cameron lost his reelection bid to the Senate in 1926, left the disposition of the Bright Angel Trail to the county, and retired to the East to lick his wounds. By that year, the park service had completed the South Kaibab Trail, reducing the Bright Angel Trail's strategic value. Coconino County reopened negotiations for the trail's sale in 1927, asking that the federal government appropriate one million dollars to spend on a new approach road from the National Old Trails Highway (U.S. Route 66) to the south rim. Negotiations since 1919 had revolved around just such a trade, but had consistently been blocked by Cameron. Since the Bright Angel remained a more popular trail than the South Kaibab, the government agreed to the new offer (for a lesser amount) and ownership transferred to the federal government on May 22, 1928.

Debra Sutphen's history of the Grandview Trail reveals that the fight for federal control of Grand Canyon roads and trails continued into the early 1940s, therefore, the historic context of public versus private rights at Grand Canyon does not end with Ralph Cameron's defeat. Still, the legal and political struggle over the Bright Angel Trail reveals the full range of maneuvers, bitterness, and duplicity entailed in this conflict of nearly three decades. A longer history is possible, one that more fully explores the National Park Service's skillful manipulation of Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey during the 1920s and 1930s, but this aspect of ultimate federal control is developed within the Grandview, South Kaibab, and Bass trails' nominations.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   8   Page  10 Historic Context: Entertainment/Recreation, 1892-1941.

While the debate raged over public versus private control over the Bright Angel Trail, tourists unaware of the storm followed its path to admire Grand Canyon's scenic splendors. A decade before the political debate emerged, Sanford Rowe, operating from a base camp five miles north of the trailhead known as Rowe's Well, began to lead tourist trips from the south rim to the Tonto Platform. Rowe developed a full tourist enterprise in the 1890s and 1900s, including a livery in Williams, a stage line to the Canyon purchased from William Bass and, later, an automobile camp at Rowe's Well complete with a coffee shop, bar, bowling alley, and dance hall. Rowe was apparently the only man engaged in tourist trips down the trail before the turn of the century.

Although prospectors had pioneered routes from the Tonto Platform to the Colorado River by the late 1880s, Sanford Rowe's tourists likely settled on a ride down to "Angel Plateau" (Plateau Point) for a quick glimpse of the river before turning back for the south rim. With Bright Angel Trail improvements to the river in 1899, visitors might easily descend in a day, enjoying Indian ruins along wayside cliffs, the infamous Devil's Corkscrew, and a leisurely stay at the mouth of Pipe Creek. The trail ended at this point, but the more adventuresome could cross the river in one of the crude canvas or wood scows in use by the turn of the century and venture up Bright Angel Creek. After 1907 tourists might take the Bright Angel Trail to Indian Garden, then continue along the Tonto Trail east to the Tipoff and descend David Rust's Cable Trail (an earlier version of the lower South Kaibab Trail) to cross the river on Rust's cable car.

Martin Buggeln began to offer trips down the Bright Angel Trail in 1901. Thomas Smith and Frank Cornette worked as trail guides for Buggeln in 1902 and noted "many hundreds" of tourists in that year. Cameron also employed wranglers to lead trips down his trail by 1903. It is worth noting that although John Hance, Pete Berry, and William Bass started their guided tours down their own trails into the Canyon long before Cameron and Buggeln came on the scene, the railroad's arrival instantly focused tourist operations at the Bright Angel Trail and usage immediately superseded that of all other trails combined.

By the middle of 1903, Ralph Cameron had completed Cameron's Hotel and Camps at the rim and Cameron's Indian Garden Camp upon the Tonto Platform. His hotel registers for 1903-1907 indicate that he initially captured a good market share of the tourist business from Buggeln and the Santa Fe. In 1904 through 1906, nearly two thousand visitors registered annually at his hotels or tent camps, at rates varying from \$1.50-\$3.00 per night. Aside from revenues derived from saddle stock, trail guides, tolls, and rooms, Cameron provided meals, rim rides (one dollar and up), riding skirts (fifty cents), and other sundries for his paying guests and trail users. In 1904 Cameron could claim that business had never been better. During a six month period in 1907 he collected \$2,996 in tolls alone, and after payment for trail maintenance and county (10%) and territorial (2%) taxes, netted a toll road profit of \$2,107.80.

Cameron's business remained good into the 1910s (although his rim hotel closed by 1909), but the amount earned provided little more than a modest living and could not compare to Fred Harvey's operations after 1905. After his election to Congress in 1908 and in later years when he engaged in other business enterprises, Cameron had to pay permanent employees such as Lannes Ferrall, manager of his rim hotel, and Niles Cameron and Clarence C. Spaulding, managers at Indian Garden. Employees and interminable lawsuits offset his revenues and may account for less money invested in trail maintenance by the 1910s. In 1915 Cameron collected \$20,000 in tolls, yet tourists complained that the Bright Angel Trail was in poor condition.

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Since Cameron charged a one dollar toll for stock riders throughout his possession of the trail, and pedestrians traveled for free, his collections of 1915 suggest that 20,000 or more tourists per year used the trail by the middle 1910s. This may represent the peak number of tourists riding mules and horses down the trail during the historic period. After the National Park Service assumed control of the trail and the Fred Harvey Company gained a monopoly on saddle stock traffic, usage continued during the 1930s at approximately this level. Superintendent Miner R. Tillotson noted in 1937 that "annual travel [along the Bright Angel] has been as follows: 1933-- 12,725; 1934--17,403; 1935--20,515; 1936--20,607." Although annual Grand Canyon visitation had multiplied from a few hundred in 1900 to 44,000 in 1919, 200,000 in 1929, and 300,000 in 1937, trail usage apparently remained fairly constant through the 1930s.

The flurry of trail building and reconstruction within Grand Canyon's central corridor between 1929 and 1939 enhanced the tourist experience, offering better trails for stock and pedestrians as well as better accommodations and a number of route alternatives. The South Kaibab Trail offered a shorter route to the river, better vistas, and a more direct crossing to Bright Angel Creek, but also a steeper descent without water along the way. After 1936, as today, rangers recommended a descent along the South Kaibab, a stroll along the Colorado River Trail, and an ascent up the Bright Angel. Improved camp facilities at Indian Garden and watered rest stops along the trail suggested continued use of the Bright Angel. In recognition of its importance to Grand Canyon tourism, the Department of the Interior in 1981 designated the Bright Angel--along with the North Kaibab, South Kaibab, and Colorado River Trails--as National Recreation Trails within the National Trails System. The Park Service since the 1930s has maintained it and the other central corridor trails to the highest standards of Grand Canyon trail maintenance.

**Historic Context: Transportation, 1891-1941.**

The Bright Angel Trail route is one of many paths within Grand Canyon used by Havasupais and their predecessors to access inner Canyon resources from the south rim. Few trails, however, allow a narrative continuum from Indian to European-American usage. The close relationship between early pioneer William Bass and his Havasupai neighbors provides an unbroken history of usage, revealed in the Bass Trails nomination. Similar narratives and physical evidence are found for Havasupai use of the Bright Angel Fault as a transportation route between the south rim and the Tonto Platform.

Physical evidence of a Havasupai path, or route, has been identified in the descriptive section of this nomination. Written records as well as Havasupai oral history document use of this route within traditional Havasupai seasonal migrations. Curtis McClure, who first visited Indian Garden as one of the original trail builders in 1890, noted that

*there were evidences in existence at the Indian Gardens, showing that at some time previous, some cultivation of the ground had been carried on by someone [and] it apparently had been burned off two or three times....*

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George Wharton James, an ardent Grand Canyon promoter with extensive personal knowledge of the Havasupais, noted that "a certain family of the Havasupais used to farm in a crude way on this spot," and that remnants of their irrigation ditches remained in the early 1890s. He added that the Havasupais as late as 1900 could give the names of the prehistoric families that had rights to this inner-Canyon site (and other Canyon sites). Park Superintendent Miner Tillotson identified this family as that of Big Jim, who remembered his family's occupation as far back as the 1860s and lived at the garden and atop the south rim well into the twentieth century.

Pete Berry and others who built the first European-American trail in 1890-91 had similar transportation goals in mind. Until 1890, prospectors had used John Hance's early trail to access the Tonto Platform. William Ashurst's discovery of promising ore deposits at Indian Garden in the late 1880s prompted the search for a more direct supply and ore shipment route to the south rim, accounting for the trail's construction. Almost immediately, Sanford Rowe found the Bright Angel a convenient way to bring his paying guests down to the Tonto Platform. After 1899 the trail became the favored path for tourists descending as far as the river. These transportation uses have been described above within the contexts of mining and tourism.

It is at first difficult to imagine that a trail built for pedestrians and saddle stock could serve as a major intra-regional transportation route well into the age of automobiles, but the Bright Angel Trail served this purpose until the late 1920s. In 1902 Francois Matthes cleared a rough path from the north rim along Bright Angel Creek to the river, thereby, in combination with the Bright Angel Trail, establishing a very rough transcanyon corridor. This avenue immediately superseded the Bass trails as the favored route because the Grand Canyon Railway spur, arriving at the head of the Bright Angel the year before, allowed a comfortable ride south to the Atlantic & Pacific tracks at Williams and to any destination from that town. "Uncle Dee" Wooley recognized the potential in 1903 when he and others formed the Grand Canyon Transportation Company and financed his son-in-law, David Rust, to improve the north trail and the crossing at the river in 1906-07. Since the 1890s, travelers along the corridor had hazarded crossings in fragile punts, but Rust installed a cable system in 1907 and the Park Service further secured the crossing with suspension bridges completed in 1921 and 1928.

From the 1890s through the late 1920s, residents of the Arizona Strip north of Grand Canyon used the Bright Angel corridor as the most efficient route to county seats at Flagstaff and Kingman. As park development accelerated at the north rim in the 1920s, the corridor became an even more important and often used link to park headquarters at Grand Canyon Village. This importance waned with the completion of the Navajo Bridge across Marble Canyon in 1929, but never completely disappeared as some local residents (particularly park rangers) preferred the twenty-mile walk or mule ride to the more than two-hundred-mile automobile trip between the two rims. Air travel since the 1940s has further reduced the need to use the corridor as a travel route, but some still prefer this avenue.

Today, the Bright Angel Trail continues as an important link in the transcanyon pathway, not only for the tens of thousands of tourists who travel it for fun each year, but also for Fred Harvey and National Park Service employees who provide support services to ailing hikers and staff the facilities at Indian Garden and Phantom Ranch. This extensive local usage will continue as long as Grand Canyon remains a national park.

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Affidavits of Frank Cornette, Robert Ferguson, Lannes L. Ferrall, Ralph H. Cameron, C.H. McClure, W.C. Bayless, D.L. Hogan, Godfrey G. Sykes, Joseph B. Tanner, Adam Molenpah, T.E. Pollack, Charles W. Heiser, John Hance, John Marshall, and others pertinent to the earliest legal battles of 1902-1903 are found in the Cameron Papers, Box 5, University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson. These affidavits help establish the trail's route and condition during the 1890s and provide details concerning its initial construction.

The following letters and telegrams illumine the political and legal disputes from 1902-1915. All are found in the Cameron Papers, Boxes 4 and 5, University of Arizona Special Collections, Tucson.

Letters

Bass, William Wallace, to L.L. Ferrall, 28 April 1910.

Berry, Pete, to Ralph Cameron, 14 June 1909.

Berry, Pete, to Niles Cameron, 11 May 1910.

Cameron, Niles, to Ralph Cameron, 22 March, 17 December, 18 December, 26 December 1909; 4 January 1910.

Cameron, Ralph, to Ralph E. Pearce, 31 March 1909.

Cameron, Ralph, to Judge Edward M. Doe, 27 March 1912.

Cameron, Ralph, to Pete Berry, 3 February 1914.

Cameron, Ralph, to Gifford Pinchot, 7 August 1909.

Ferrall, Lannis L., to Ralph Cameron, 13 July 1905; 19 March, 26 June, 23 July, 20 November, 14 December, 16 December 1909; 4 January 1910; 6 June 1911.

Ferrall, Louisa, to Ralph Cameron, 11 November 1908.

Graves, Forester Henry S., to District Forester, Albuquerque, 7 April 1910.

Spaulding, C.C., to Ralph Cameron, 13 March, 10 June, 7 December 1909.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   9   Page   4  Telegrams

Ferrall, Lannis L., to Ralph Cameron, 6 June 1911.

Cameron, Ralph, to Lannis L. Ferrall, 12 June 1911.

Field observations and photographs were completed by Mike Anderson in January and June 1992. Many of the figures submitted with this nomination were collected or produced by Teri Cleeland for her Masters Thesis. Originals were not located for this submission.

## Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # \_\_\_\_\_
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # \_\_\_\_\_

## Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository): Grand Canyon National Park Library

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreeage of Property: 90 acres (trail = 41 acres; 3 rest shelters = 4.5 acres; Indian Garden + 44.5 acres)

## UTM References:

A 12 397150 3990775 B 12 397450 3991050  
C 12 397800 3991575 D 12 398500 3992900  
E 12 399650 3994325 F 12 400075 3993925  
G 12 400075 2995350

## Verbal Boundary Description:

Contributing properties along the trail, excluding those properties within the Indian Garden subdistrict, include the three trailside shelters, which are located as follows:

1.5-Mile trailside shelter: UTM 12 397450 3991050  
3-Mile trailside shelter: UTM 12 397800 3991575  
River trailside shelter: UTM 12 400075 3995350

The Indian Garden subdistrict is defined as a rectangle which surrounds the historic development area. The southern boundary is 200 feet south of the NPS mule corral and is 700 feet wide with the trail as an approximate centerline. The western boundary is a straight compass bearing of 40 degrees east of north, and is 200 feet west of the NPS rock residence. It runs north to a point 200 feet beyond the lower pump house. The northern boundary is parallel to the southern boundary, also 700 feet wide. The eastern boundary is a straight line parallel to the western boundary, running 200 feet east of the reservoir. Contributing properties within this subdistrict are identified in the description section of this nomination. Indian Garden is located approximately 4.5 trail miles down from the rim at Kolb Studio along today's trail. The center location, approximately at the junction of today's Bright Angel Trail and the trail to Plateau point, is UTM 12 398500 3992900.

## Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the entire 7.8-mile trail from Kolb Studio to the Colorado River. Four feet is allowed for average trail width and a 20-foot buffer zone on each side of the trail is added. Indian Garden is considered an historic subdistrict, containing several contributing structures and sites. The subdistrict is drawn 700' x 2800' to include the contributing properties identified in the description section of this nomination. Trailside shelters are given a circular buffer zone with a radius of 150 feet from the structures.

Careful consideration was given to Teri Cleeland's thesis, "The Cross Canyon Corridor Historic District in Grand Canyon National Park: A Model for Historic Preservation," which was written specifically to lay the groundwork for national register nomination and future preservation in 1986. With few exceptions, the authors of this nomination agree with the boundary descriptions Teri defines.

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The boundaries here included for Indian Garden and the trailside shelters were, in fact, lifted directly from her thesis, with the current authors providing the UTM reference points. We agree with Teri's justification for the boundaries of Indian Garden, and have arbitrarily used the same dimensions even though noncontributing structures have been built outside the protective rectangle since 1986. We cannot predict the future extent of Indian Garden development and, in any event, believe that the structures considered historic today are those with which this nomination is concerned. Future historians may want to expand, contract, or otherwise alter this historic district at a later date to describe a separate district nomination. The authors also agree with Teri that trail boundaries are difficult to establish precisely, and have wrestled with the question through each of the individual nominations. The problem boils down to one of preserving the integrity of the trail. We agree that "visual integrity" is not only difficult to define, but if carried to its extreme, might warrant the designation of the entire Canyon as a buffer zone. This designation is, of course, far too restrictive to necessary future development within the park. We trust that park administrators will consider visual integrity when contemplating any Canyon construction, within their charter to preserve and protect the natural resource. Boundaries necessary to preserve physical integrity, too, are arbitrary, but the authors have typically used an average twenty-foot buffer zone on both sides of a trail unless conditions seem to call for a larger width. The object is to protect the trail itself and any structural supports. It is pointless to attempt to identify exact requirements for this protection along every foot of a 7.8-mile trail, which might only lead to further legal and political debates (the Bright Angel has seen enough of these) concerning future trail maintenance or trailside structures. Again, the authors assume that the park service will consider the need to protect the trail in plans for future construction.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**Additional Information**

Continuation Sheets: Section 7, 10 pages; Section 8, 12 pages; Section 9, 4 pages; Section 10, 2 pages.

Maps: USGS map: Bright Angel, Arizona

Photographs: 8 photographs  
17 figures

This form was originally prepared in 1991 by Mike Anderson and Debra Sutphen as part of a joint project between Northern Arizona University's Center for Colorado Plateau Studies and the National Park Service. It was revised in August 2002 by Mike Anderson, Amanda Zeman, and Mark Jacobson, with further minor edits by Anderson in December 2006.

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**Property Owner**

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