



Cliff Notes CENTENNIAL: 1907-2007

100 YEARS OF PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP



Visitors at the Lower Cliff Dwelling in the early 1900s. NPS photo

Reclamation, Conservation, Preservation Movements in 1906

Visitors by the millions have come during the past 100 years to gaze at the cliff dwellings and try to visualize the long-ago people who built them. Generations of dedicated men and women have worked to identify, analyze, preserve, and maintain these archaeological treasures of the American Southwest.

Over the past century, both the U.S. Forest Service (1907-1933) and the National Park Service (1934-present), as well as the visitors have left their mark, literally and metaphorically, on the Monument. Yet this small, isolated national monument has survived and thrived despite changes in values, knowledge, preservation techniques, bureaucratic realignment, and accessibility.

Three national movements in the first decade of the 20th century have had a profound impact on the Monument and Tonto Basin: reclamation, conservation, and preservation. The Reclamation Service plugged the confluence of the Salt River and Tonto Creek with a dam in 1906, and the Forest Service set aside 2.9 million surrounding acres as a national forest to protect its watershed. Also in 1906, the Antiquities Act gave the president the power to protect historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest. In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the Tonto Cliff Dwellings as a National Monument.

The cliff dwellings serve as an excellent vantage point from which to see the influence of these three national movements. They are also testimony to a great archeological loss, for shortly after legal protection was granted for the cliff dwellings perched high above the river, hundreds of related sites below them were flooded and lost to future generations.

From Tonto National Monument: An Administrative History by Nancy Dallett, 2006.

The American Antiquities Act of 1906

The Antiquities Act grew out of concerns that developed during the 19th century for the preservation of America's archeological sites and the artifacts and information that they contained. President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act into law on June 8, 1906. The act established the first general legal protection of cultural and natural resources in the United States. It obligates federal agencies that manage public lands to preserve for present and future generations the historic, scientific, commemorative, and cultural values of the archeological and historic sites and structures on these lands. It also authorizes the

President to protect landmarks, structures, and objects of historic or scientific interest by designating them as National Monuments.

Today, there are 116 National Monuments in the country; 90 are managed by the National Park Service. Using his authority of Presidential Proclamation, Theodore Roosevelt established 18 National Monuments. He was surpassed only by Bill Clinton who created 19.

Dedication of Roosevelt Dam March 17, 1911

An Historic Account of the Event

A. M. Smith, a government electrician in charge of arranging the light display at Roosevelt Dam, wrote to his wife, Agnes, 20, in Phoenix to join him at Roosevelt for the dedication. She was the only passenger aboard the stagecoach the morning of March 17, 1911 when it left Mesa with Bud Norton at the reins. Coming down Fish Creek Hill not far from Fish Creek Station the stage came upon an automobile stopped in the road. The *Gazette* said, "... just as the stage team passed, the chauffeur crawled from beneath the car. This startled the horses, and they started at a mad gallop. ... Norton tried to keep his team close to the mountain, and might have succeeded in controlling it had the stage not dropped off a culvert and hurled its occupants with terrific force head foremost into the rocky hillside." The *Republican* reported the stage went over a steep embankment at a sharp curve, the coach rolling several times. When it came to a stop, Mrs. Smith and Norton were pinned beneath. Mrs. Smith suffered a fractured skull and was unconscious, while eight of Norton's ribs were fractured. The horses broke free from the stage when it left the road and they continued to Fish Creek Station. A party was immediately organized to go back up the road to learn what had happened to the stage. The searchers found Mrs. Smith and Norton and carried them to Fish Creek Station. Doctors were summoned from Mesa and Roosevelt. After doctors performed surgery on Mrs. Smith, she was taken by car to the hospital in Roosevelt. Norton remained at Fish Creek Station. Mrs. Smith died at 2 o'clock the next day. Besides her husband, she was survived by a year-old son and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James K. Anderson of Phoenix.



Car near stage accident on the Apache Trail. Photo by permission of the Salt River Project.

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The Tonto Tourism Era

Early visitation to the monument was generated mostly by outside promoters ...



As part of its campaign to encourage Western tourism, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company began offering tours known as *Indian Detours* and *Off the Beaten Path* as sidetrips on their major routes. Trips along the Apache Trail began around 1915 and were especially popular during the 1930's. Adventurous travelers, called "detourists" were met at the railroad station in either Phoenix or Globe by women dressed in Southwestern attire and accompanied by a cowboy driven motor car with a retractable roof. The Apache Trail detour took eight hours, included lunch at the Apache Lodge at Roosevelt Dam, and a guided tour of the Tonto Cliff Dwellings. The entire trip cost \$10; with an overnight stay at the lodge, the trip would cost an additional \$2 to \$5. *Arizona Tours*, *Pacific Greyhound*, and *Tanner Tours* soon joined Southern Pacific in providing tours to Tonto National Monument.

The Apache Lodge at Roosevelt Dam (demolished in 1940). Photo by permission of the Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

Dedication of Roosevelt Dam (cont'd. from pg. 2)

An Historic Account of the Event



Theodore Roosevelt speaking at the dedication of the Dam March 17, 1911. Photo by permission of D.C Jackson.

The private railroad car occupied by the Roosevelts was attached to the end of the Santa Fe train. The Roosevelts were said to be still at breakfast when the train rolled to a stop in Phoenix at 9:20 am. Ten minutes elapsed before Roosevelt appeared on the back platform of the car, squinting through his glasses at the crowd and waving a black fedora. The automobiles that were to carry the visitors and members of the official party to the dam were lined up beside the railroad car. At the wheel of Roosevelt's car was former Rough Rider Wesley Hill of Tempe, wearing a linen coat. Roosevelt, discerning that was "the regulation uniform" for the road, donned a similar coat over his khaki trousers tucked into leather leggings, black coat and vest, turned down collar and tie. People lined the streets of Phoenix to get a glimpse of Roosevelt and shout their greetings. Scattered among the hundreds of people gathered were men wearing Rough Riders yellow badges in the lapels of their coats. As Roosevelt's car entered the grounds of the Phoenix Indian School, the school band played *Hail to the Chief*, and the cadets presented arms. After delivering a brief address, an Indian stepped forward to crank up Roosevelt's car. As the motor started, Roosevelt reached out of the car and shook hands with the Indian and thanked him. Once past the Granite Reef Diversion Dam, the drivers sped as fast as possible, stirring up considerable dust, but every few miles the lead car slowed to make certain the party was intact. Behind the last guest auto came car No.13, which was occupied by mechanics to make repairs if needed along the road.

The automobile carrying Roosevelt arrived at Mormon Flat at 1:15 pm, which news was carried to the office of the *Arizona Democrat* in Phoenix by carrier pigeon. The note said that Roosevelt and party had been greeted by men and women in front of every farmhouse or along the road in the flat country, and by miners and prospectors in the canyon country.

The *Gazette* reported the trip to Roosevelt Dam "was made without episode," but the *Republican* said Roosevelt stopped at Fish Creek Station long enough to visit stagecoach driver Norton, who had expressed a desire to see the former president (the *Republican* also said Roosevelt visited Norton on the way back to Phoenix). Some of the autos had difficulty on the long grades, but the *Gazette* said 175 cars made the trip from the Salt River Valley and about 50 more from Globe. The *Democrat* said its auto passed 14 disabled vehicles along the Roosevelt Road.

The appearance of Roosevelt's car at 4:15 pm rounding the last bend before the dam, was the signal for the discharge of 11 guns followed by the cheers of hundreds of people. The dedication began with an invocation by Bishop Atwood which he concluded by reciting the Lord's Prayer accompanied by the crowd. Several speakers from the Salt River Project and Water User's Association addressed the crowd. Roosevelt was the last speaker and he spoke extemporaneously. He said there were two achievements of his administration of which he was very proud, "this reclamation work in the West and the Panama Canal." Among his other remarks were these:

... "first of all, I want to thank you for having named the dam after me. I do not know if it is of any consequence to a man whether he has a monument. I know it is of mighty little consequence whether he has a statue after he is dead. If there could be any monument which would appeal to any man, surely it is this."

Story and photos from *Roosevelt Dam: A History to 1911* by Earl A. Zarbin 1984, published by Salt River Project of Phoenix and reprinted by permission.

Message from the Superintendent

Anniversaries can be a good opportunity to both look back and look forward. Over the last few years, we have enjoyed looking back with Arizona State University historian Nancy Dallett, who has written an administrative history of Tonto National Monument. We hope to have her work published and available at the Monument this year. In it, Nancy explores themes that place the Tonto Cliff Dwellings and the broader Tonto Basin “at the confluence of the reclamation, conservation, and preservation movements” of the early 20th century. There were important decisions made here a century ago -- there have been important decisions made here since. We think we are laying the groundwork for the important decisions that will be made here in the future.



The first museum at the park, built in 1938, was demolished when the present Visitor Center was built in 1964. NPS Photo.

Our charge at Tonto National Monument is to protect the cliff dwellings and environment in which they are found in perpetuity for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Among our highest priorities today is to learn as much as we can about the dwellings, the people who lived in them, and the natural environment that sustained them and sustains us. Toward that end, we have restarted an on-site archeological program that had lapsed for over thirty years. Recently we have performed professional evaluations of all the archeological sites at the Monument and have used the latest digital technology to create computer models of the most important. These models can be used by future managers as an archive -- we plan to use them as interpretive tools also.

We have also begun a program of taking inventory and monitoring the natural resources of the Monument. The inventory of all the birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects is the most complete it has ever been. The same is true of the plants. In particular, the park has a very detailed inventory of invasive non-native plants known to exist in the area and actively removes most of them every year. Non-native grasses are invasive plants that cover a large percentage of the Monument and which we may never eliminate. Monitoring of 25 “vital signs” in the natural environment has begun and, once it has been going long enough to produce trends, will give future managers valuable information to help in decision-making.

One of the first things we will do in the second century of the Monument’s existence is bring much of the new information we are learning to you in new museum exhibits in our Visitor Center. The current ones were installed in 1964 and we have learned a lot about the Monument’s resources and the people who built the cliff dwellings since then. We hope you will enjoy the new presentations and continue to support Tonto National Monument in its second century.



Brad Traver, Superintendent

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