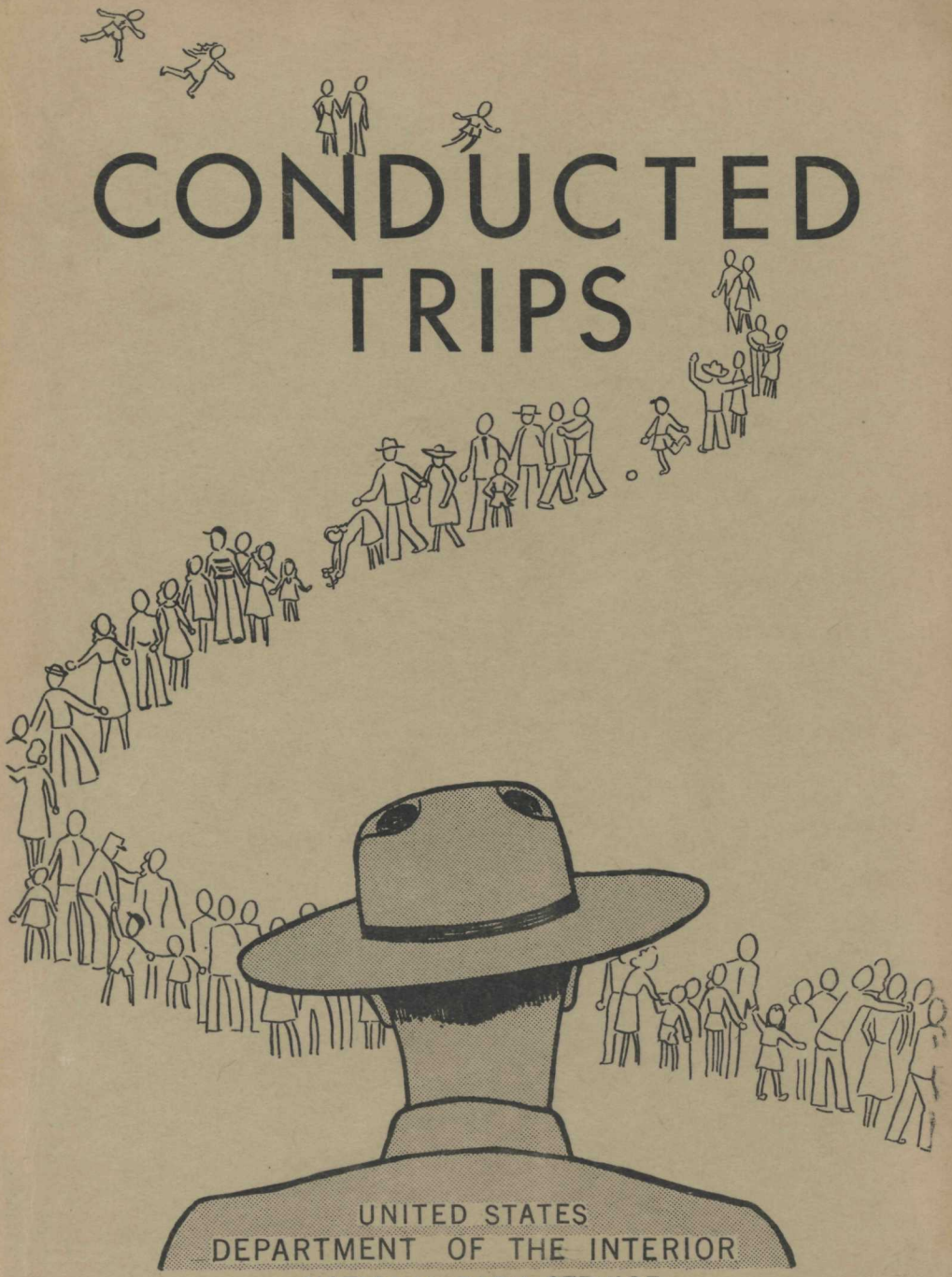
CONDUCTED TRIPS



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IN SERVICE TRAINING SERIES

CONDUCTED TRIPS

TRAINING BULLETIN

FOR

FIELD EMPLOYEES

OF THE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

IN-SERVICE TRAINING SERIES

1954

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to present *Conducted Trips,* the second of the series of National Park Service aids to interpretation. A logical sequel to *Talks, Conducted Trips* is based on many years of experience of a great many National Park Service interpreters. It incorporates ideas proven through practical field experience, and presents the consensus of the Information, History, and Natural History Divisions of the Service, working under Assistant Director Ronald F. Lee. Development of the general concept of the series, and the organization and writing of *Talks* and *Conducted Trips,* were the responsibility of Howard R. Stagner, Chief of Interpretation in the Natural History Division.

Conducted Trips is designed to assist those who conduct visitors afield to achieve a high standard of performance. It does not attempt to answer every question, or to describe every situation, nor will everything in this booklet apply to every area. Rather, its purpose is to establish a background of principle, method, and technique which may guide the individual interpreter in his own planning and presentation, and which may be drawn upon and adapted so as best to meet individual and local needs.

Interpretation in its broadest sense is an important and a very rewarding Service function, worthy of the highest quality of performance. May the booklets of this series assist in securing the highest standard of public service in this field of endeavor.

Conrad L. Wirth

Director

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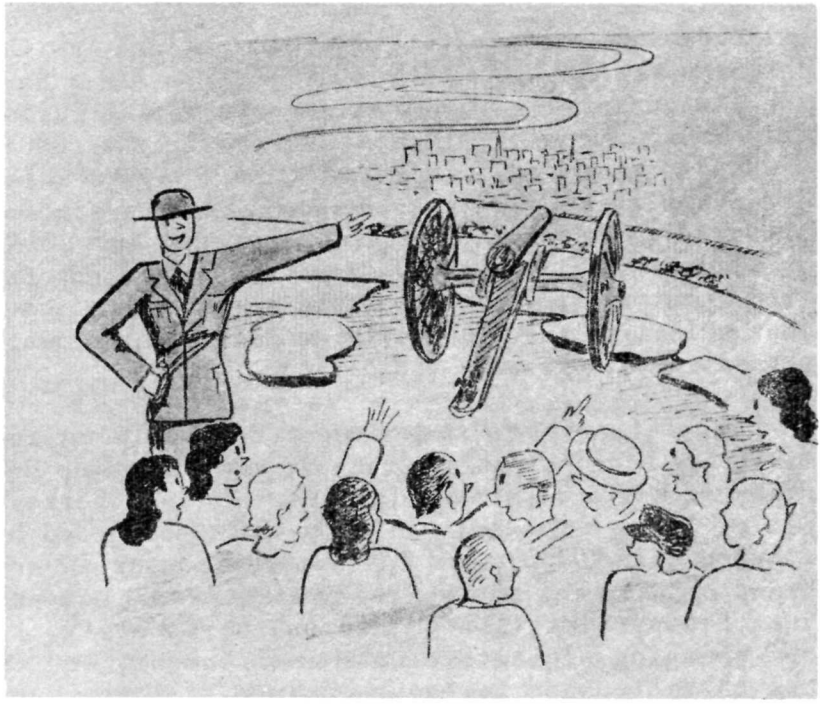


CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Conducted trips have an important tradition, for they were one of the first interpretive activities developed in areas of the National Park System. Through the years other interpretive methods have developed and have expanded greatly, but the conducted trip, itself expanded into new subject fields and into new situations, continues to merit a very important place.

The conducted trip is the basic interpretive activity in some areas, and serves essentially all of the area visitors. Carlsbad Caverns and certain areas containing perishable ruin structures are

examples. In other situations, particularly in the larger parks and monuments, and in those areas having a wide variety of subject interest, the guided trip is of lesser importance considering the number of visitors served. The traditional nature walk, for example, supplements the basic interpretation provided by museums, lecture programs, and self-guiding devices. In the latter case, the conducted trip provides a more specialized service for a somewhat selective group, usually composing but a small percentage of the area visitation.

In both cases, the conducted trip is an activity of high potential quality, and its value derives from two important factors. It is a personalized service not only in that it is conducted by a human being, but also in that the leader is not bound by a strict pattern of procedure but can adjust his presentation to his own personality, to the changing elements of the environment, and to the character and to the reactions of the group. Furthermore, a conducted trip is an interpretation which takes place in the environment itself, utilizing the actual objects of nature or of history to reveal and to illustrate the interpretive theme. The real thing--not a photo, a model, a reproduction, or a wordy description--constitutes the basic interpretive material. This fact is of tremendous importance in giving the activity reality and lasting emphasis. In brief, a conducted trip is interpretation face-to-face, and on location.

The objectives of this activity are to assist the visitor to obtain all or a part of the following:

1. The facts of history or of nature as revealed along the tour route.

2. A recreational experience.

3. An appreciation of scenic values.

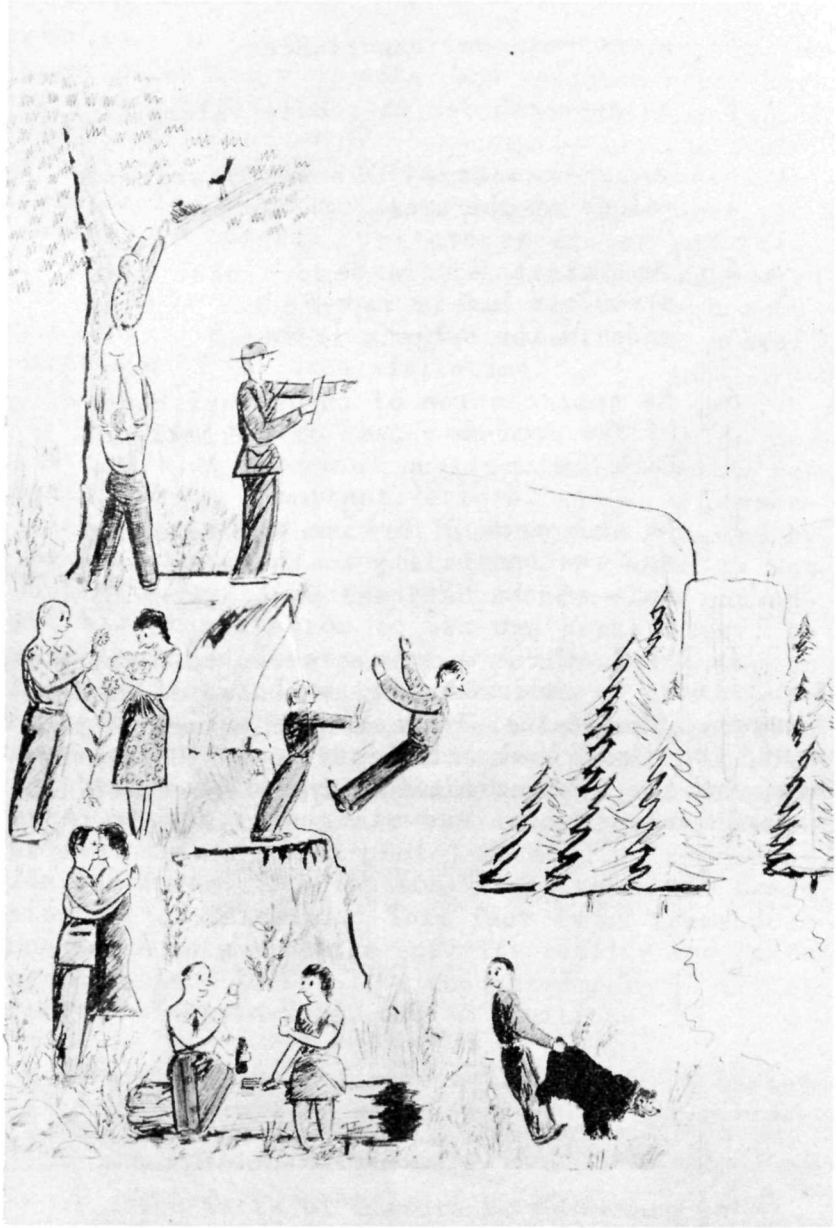
4. An awareness of the inspirational values of the area.

5. An interest to a degree that will stimulate him to independent experience in the subject field.

6. An appreciation of the significance of the area as a unit of the National Park System.

7. An awareness of his own relationship and responsibility to the area as a unit of the National Park System.

In brief, the interpreter seeks to develop in the visitor an understanding awareness of an environment. The status of the area as a park or monument, the historical or scientific subject materials, and the visitor himself are elements of that environment.



POOR MECHANICS CAN RUIN . . . . . .

CHAPTER II

CONDUCTED TRIP MECHANICS

On a conducted trip, two distinctly different activities are involved: (1) Moving people from place to place, and (2) providing an interpretation along the way. Interpretation is the basic purpose, but its effectiveness is determined to a very great degree by how well the leader manages the mechanics of handling people. The leader is concerned with getting his party from one place to another with dispatch, and with due regard for ease, comfort, and safety. He has also the very practical problem of fitting his interpretive presentation into a given pattern of movement.

Each trip presents its own problems in this regard. Parties may range from a half dozen individuals to groups numbering over a thousand. Small groups offer few problems of movement or of adjusting the interpretive story to that pattern of movement. For large parties and on extended trips, movement, comfort, and safety often require much more attention and time than does the interpretive presentation itself.

Transportation is another variable, and may be accomplished by bus, boat, horseback, private car, auto caravan, or on foot, and each situation imposes different problems of mechanics, and may require different interpretive techniques. Thus, on a boat or bus tour the leader is in nearly continuous contact with his party, and a more or less continuous presentation is possible. Movement produces no discontinuities. The leader of a horseback or auto caravan tour, on the other hand, sees

his party only at detached intervals. In the former case, the pattern of movement ties the interpretive story together. In the latter, movement breaks the story into detached segments.

Before discussing the interpretive techniques, let us consider the mechanics of this activity in general, and under various special situations.

Before the Trip Starts

It is good practice to be on the job at least fifteen minutes before the time scheduled for your trip to start. Your uniform immediately identifies you, and is all the personal introduction you need. So, during this interval, be alert, active, and take the initiative. Approach those who have assembled with some vigor, and in a spirit of friendliness. Greet the visitors and visit with them. You are not yet dealing with a group, but with individuals, and this is your opportunity to get the trip started on a conversational level. Show the people that you will be talking *with* them, not *to* them. The attitudes you establish at this time will help you maintain that desirable conversational approach even though the group becomes too large for conversation in fact. At the same time, don't be dominated by individuals, but circulate; let as many people as possible see you, hear you, and talk with you. During this time you will be telling people where you are going and what you will do. Your whole purpose is to let people know that something is about to start, that it promises to be an interesting event, that you are going to handle it, and that you are a capable and a friendly sort of person to be with on such an occasion.

This is your opportunity, too, to size up your party. Each group will be different, and the way you conduct the trip will depend upon how you sum up the group. What are their interests? What do they expect from this trip? Are they familiar with this area? How much background information will you need to supply?

Start Something and Start on Time

When the starting time arrives, start something at once. Don't make those who were on time "wait just a few more minutes" for latecomers. Take charge in a positive manner. The people expect you to be a leader, and a listless, uncertain, delayed beginning lets you down in their eyes. Previously you were dealing with individuals, but now you recognize the party *as a group*. Greet them as a group, introduce yourself if you wish, but at least identify yourself as a member of the National Park Service. When the group is not too large, you may ask the members of the party also to introduce themselves and tell where they are from. Tell the party where you are going, what you will do, and when you will be back. Be sure to mention, but do not overemphasize, any difficulties that may be encountered, such as steep trail, ladders, stairs, wet trail, etc. Invite every one to take the excursion with you.

In some situations you will know that all who have assembled intend to go with you. You do not have to sell the trip to them, but can proceed at once with your interpretive treatment. Remember, though, that there may be some latecomers. In other situations, where the trip starts at a focal point, a museum, hotel, or other more or less public place, there will be many people gathered who do not

as yet plan to go with you, and others who do not even know that your trip is scheduled. In these situations, one of your first objectives is to attract as many of these casuals as possible to come over and join the party.

So, immediately after your invitation, before you move along the trail, make a rapid transition directly to some dramatic feature in prelude to your interpretive story. This may be something contrived especially to excite interest. Make this dramatic and brief. Do not tell all the story now, but very soon and without distinguishing between participants and casuals, lead the group just a short distance along the route to see something which further illustrates what you are saying. You may move a second, or third time, if circumstances dictate, before you conclude this first introductory or prelude story.

What have you accomplished up to this point? You have remained in sight so that latecomers can join the party, and you have included casuals as well as intended participants in the group. You have avoided making an occasion for anyone to drop out. In inducing casuals to go a few steps along the trail with you, you have led them to an action of participation *before* they have actually decided to participate. This is exactly what the sideshow barker attempts when he says "step up a little closer, folks." This is good practical psychology, and it works.

Now you move on, but before you get out of sight of the starting point, recognize that others have joined the party, and briefly and very casually repeat the announcement of the activity and the invitation. Now that the casuals have had a sample

of your work and have themselves participated, you thus give them a chance to drop out if they feel they must.

Contrast this sort of a beginning with that of the unimaginative, and perhaps timid, leader whose very first, nearly inaudible words are "Ladies and Gentlemen, will those who are going on the 9 o'clock nature walk, please follow me down the trail," and who then proceeds, never stopping until he is completely out of sight of the point of origin.

Nor is it good practice, in general, to ask for questions during these preliminary stages of the trip itself. Before the trip started, you established friendly, conversational contact with the party, and you may have answered many questions. Now your purpose is to collect the group, to unify it, and to establish your control over it. A lengthy question and answer period at this time interrupts the continuity, the unity, the sense of action, and the development of your control. You will encourage and will make many opportunities for questions to much better advantage later as you unfold the story along the trail.

Your Progress Along the Trail

Small parties present fewer problems of mechanics or of interpretation. If you talk *with* rather than *to* your people, if your leadership is exercised unobtrusively, and if you are sensitive to your group, then their responses will indicate to you how fast to move, when to stop, how long to talk, and even what to say. Establish good rapport, and a small party will almost run itself.

As attendance increases, your problems of mechanics multiply. Large parties require more time

for starting, moving, and reassembling, and unless expertly handled, movement can rob you of time for interpretation. Set a pace that is not tiring to your party, and at the same time not so slow as to be boring to the more vigorous or the more impatient members. When your party is not too large, make frequent stops, but make them short. Frequent moves give the activity a sense of action, of something going on, and frequent short stops provide rest intervals. For larger groups, stops must be fewer, but should not be prolonged merely to enable you to play the long record. Shorten the story, rather than prolong the stops.

Move fast at first, with a large party. This opens up the trail behind you so that the group can get under way as fast as possible. Then slow down to a moderate pace. As you approach the next stop, slow down even more so that all the gaps in the line behind you can close up, reducing the dead time needed to reassemble.

When you stop, *stop to observe something.* After all, this is a trip afield, and its objective in the visitors' minds is to see something. Stop, not to rest or to deliver a speech, but to see, hear, smell, taste, or feel something. Your discussion can go on from there, but observe something first. Stop where all can see, where you can talk to everyone, and where the group can assemble in comfort.

Have a definite point of dismissal, and let the party know the trip is over. Don't let it just disintegrate. When this is at some distance from the starting point, describe the trails that are available to those who would explore further, and invite the rest to walk with you back to the point

of origin. On a circle trip where you return to the point of origin, stop for the interpretive climax before the people see the destination and become impatient.

Some General Suggestions

Keep in the lead at all times, and turn around to talk to *all* the group. Hold your head up, and throw your voice over the heads of those near you. Also, keep the man in the rear in view and in mind. These practices will help you make yourself heard by everyone. When you identify someone who does not hear well, manage unobtrusively to get him near you.

As you move from place to place, converse with those near you if you will, but make it obvious that no one is missing anything important. Repeat the important observations, and repeat the questions that are asked you so that everyone knows what is going on. Talking to the party while you are walking is not good practice, and if you stand over a precipice or on a parapet wall some people will be so concerned for your safety that they won't hear a word you say. Don't compete with yourself for attention. Instead of trying to outshout a noisy group in the rear, try lowering your voice. If your commentary is really interesting, the rest of the group will handle the noise problem for you.

Announcements.--Every activity should be identified as an event provided by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. Seek opportunities also to invite visitors to attend other activities, and to suggest publications that are available. In general, the most effective time for these announcements is not necessarily at the

start or as a part of the conclusion. Rather, be informal and casual, and make the announcements relate to what you are doing and seeing at the time. For example:

> Yes, this pegmatite boulder tells us a lot about the geology of these mountains. It is a very interesting story, and I think you would enjoy reading up on it in the pamphlet *Glaciers of the Rockies*. We have it on display in the museum. Stop by and look it over.
>
> *or*
>
> Now that we have seen the battlefield, stop at the museum when you have time and see the whole battle explained on the electric map. Historian Bill Jones is an expert on this battle, and he will be there to demonstrate it by means of the electric map.

In making announcements and issuing invitations, the personal and the imperative forms of speech are more effective than the impersonal and the simple declarative. In this regard, compare the following:

> There will be an illustrated talk tonight at 8 o'clock at the museum. The public is invited and no admission is charged. The subject is on mountaineering.
>
> - - -
>
> Come over to the museum tonight about 8 and hear Ranger Smith tell about his ascent of the east face of Long's Peak. It's free and we would enjoy having you come. Smith tells an exciting story, and his pictures are exceptional. I think you will enjoy it.

To sum up, perhaps it would be better to say "Don't Make Announcements." Rather, weld the information you wish to convey into your interpretive presentation. Relate it to what you are doing and seeing and thus give this information meaning, and a certain degree of drama. Capitalize upon the interests you have created in the group to give your announcements their greatest impact, their best reception. A cold, formal announcement to "Be careful with fire" at the beginning of an activity, before interest has been developed, probably has very little effect. On the other hand, the fire story coupled with specific bits of advice to the visitor, presented within and as a logical development of an interpretive story, can be most effective. We are not as blatant, as obvious, or as crude, but we can still learn a great deal from radio and TV commercials as to how, as well how not, to make announcements.

Practice Conservation.--Confine destructive use of materials to the absolute minimum. Discourage collecting by others, and never collect specimens for study or scientific purposes on a conducted trip. Do use opportunities to encourage conservation and to discourage vandalism and the litterbug. Pick up a scrap of paper or a film carton yourself once in a while, and dispose of it properly. It isn't always necessary to explain--just be very obvious in setting a good example. In some situations, where fragile materials are to be encountered, let the party handle an expendable specimen at the beginning, and thus satisfy their urge to touch, break, or examine the material.

Pointers.--A small hand mirror is a good device for pointing out a flower, tree, or formation,

or for indicating the location of a bird. Flashlights may be similarly used in some places and one with a strong beam is a good star pointer on astronomy trips. In using flashlights in caves or ruins, move the beam very slowly from one point to the next so the eye can follow.

A checklist of common birds, mimeographed on a stiff card, is a useful aid on bird walks.

Where you need a person to bring up the rear, choose someone in brightly colored or distinctive attire so you can recognize him at each stop and thereby know that the whole party has assembled.

For groups of children, at the very start emphasize the rules of conduct that you expect to be observed.

When your walking party meets a horseback party, yield the right-of-way. Take your party off the trail, and all of them to the same side so the horses will not have to pass between walls of people. Caution your group to stand quietly until the horses have passed.

If circumstances prevent your return at the announced time, let the party know soon enough so that any who have schedules to meet can return ahead of the party.

Where there is any unusual element of danger, particularly that of getting lost, keep close check of the group, and count noses from time to time. Ask people to let you know if they leave the party. Sometimes you can place this responsibility on members of the party themselves to keep track of each other. Identify poison ivy, say what needs to be said about snakes, or give other such necessary advice early in the trip.

Accidents.--In case of an accident, you have two responsibilities. The first is to your group, and this is not diminished simply because one of them has had an accident. The second, and equally important, is your responsibility to the injured person.

Your attention to your group may be delayed, but you are still under obligation to get it back and to get it back safely. Sometimes your party may be released to return on its own. Explain the situation and get approval of this procedure before releasing the group. If there is any possibility of losing the way, keep the party together, perhaps under the leadership of an experienced volunteer whom the party agrees to accept. Sometimes you may have to take them back yourself, leaving capable volunteers with the injured, and in very exceptional cases, you may find it necessary to hold everyone until relief comes to the scene. Circumstances will differ, and your good judgment must determine how your responsibilities must be met.

You have an added responsibility to the injured person. Ask your group to wait, *away from the scene,* secure a volunteer to assist you, size up the accident, and render first aid. Then determine whether or not the injured can be moved, or whether he should remain until additional help arrives. You may leave him with a volunteer, you may have to stay yourself; you should, if necessary, send an experienced volunteer for help. Again, your own good judgment must determine the best way of meeting the situation.

Some Specific Suggestions for Specific Situations

Extended or Difficult Hikes.--Be sure each

individual knows just how difficult the trip is. Size up the party. Assure yourself that each person is adequately clothed and equipped, that he is physically capable and is not likely to impede the party.

Set a pace adjusted to the abilities of the party and the difficulties of the terrain. The most effective method of moving a party of varied abilities over an extended trail is by following a routine of definite clocked intervals of movement and of rest. For example, on a moderately steep trail, two minutes of walking followed by a half-minute stop will get a party to a destination faster and in much better condition than when rests are taken at irregular intervals as they appear to be needed. Make the rest stops interpretive opportunities--never remind the people that they may be tired by announcing a rest stop.

Count your party--count them *soon* after the start, count them at strategic places on the way and check them off as they leave the trail. Generally you keep a party together on the return. Two leaders, however, can divide the party into a fast and a slow group.

You are half way to your destination, and someone wants to go back. Don't over-encourage him to continue on. Suggest that he wait for your return, or that he go on more leisurely provided he does not leave the trail. Or, if he insists on going back, describe exactly how to get back, instruct him not to leave the trail, and try to find someone else who would like to go back with him.

Avoid dangerous situations. Do not urge people to an experience which, while perfectly safe in your

eyes, is new and appears dangerous to them. Nor should you over-dramatize such situations. Approach stairways, ladders, narrow or steep trails casually. Say what needs to be said, pass on, and lend a hand to those who seem to need it.

Carry first-aid materials, and know how to use them. Leaders of strenuous trips especially should have a Red Cross first-aid card or its equivalent training.

If the line spreads too far behind you, either you are moving too fast, or are not stopping often enough. Or try this: Tell the people to maintain their relative positions in line. Then periodically reverse the line to place the slow walkers in front where they retard, but in turn are pushed along by, the fast walkers.

Rest stops that are for "rest" purposes must be provided at intervals. Try this: Take all the men up the trail, tell the women to wait five minutes, then follow. You need say no more.

Children? Sometimes all-day hikes become day nurseries to take care of the children of adults who want some free time. Children are welcome as participants, but if their presence without parental control interferes with the conduct of the excursion, it is proper to require that all children of problem age be accompanied by an adult responsible for their behavior and safety.

Overnight Hikes.--The suggestions for extended trips are equally applicable to overnight hikes. The ranger-naturalist ordinarily will assume no responsibility for actual arrangements for the accommodations, feeding, or the packing of duffle. He

should make suggestions and give advice and should check upon the adequacy of arrangements, but the specific arrangements are the responsibility of the participant.

Horseback Trips.--Interpretation from the saddle is not very satisfactory except for small groups. When the party exceeds about ten or fifteen, if is difficult for the leader to be in contact with all while actually on the trail. In open country, and if the horses are docile, larger parties can assemble much as if they were on foot. Otherwise, it is better to arrange rest stops where the party can dismount for interpretive episodes. At such times, review the trail just covered, present the scene at hand, and anticipate what lies ahead. Then as you ride, pass the word along--saddle to saddle--to call attention to specific features, and to call to mind the points covered at the last stop in anticipation of this portion of the route. Remember also that some in the group will be so concerned, perhaps unnecessarily so, with the management of their mounts, that they will have no attention left for you. Free them of this concern when you want to get really serious about interpretation.

The management of horses and the collection of fees should not be a responsibility of the ranger-naturalist. Have advance understandings with the horse operator to the effect that:

1. The ranger-naturalist will announce and invite people to attend saddle trips, but the business arrangements will be conducted between participant and operator.

2. Parties will be accompanied by a horse guide representing the operator in looking after the stock.

3. The "guiding" or interpretive activities of the trip are the responsibility of the ranger-naturalist, not the wrangler.

Auto Caravans.--Traffic problems are an added concern on auto caravans. Make previous arrangements for traffic control where needed. If at all possible, get the participating cars in line at the starting point, and request each to retain the same place in line. Try to keep this line intact, bumper to bumper, at all stops. This saves a tremendous amount of confusion and loss of time in getting under way. When you start out, start slowly, and *very* gradually increase the speed. Generally most people will space themselves much closer on a caravan than in normal driving, so hold your top speed down accordingly. Where you must cross traffic, arrange to have traffic held until your caravan has crossed. Where traffic is heavy, it will be very useful to have the cars in your caravan turn on their lights.

Give very obvious hand signals long before you stop or turn, and if traffic permits, move to the center of the road so you can be seen far back along the line. Slow down very gradually as you approach a stop. Then, a few hundred yards from your destination, speed up so you can park, dismount, and be ready to handle parking, traffic, and safety as your caravan drives up. If the car behind you is instructed to continue slowly when you speed up, you will have plenty of time to get into position.

Be alert to the possible dangers from passing cars as your party dismounts. As an aid, park the line 4 or 5 feet out from the curb leaving room on the side away from traffic for the people to dismount and to maneuver. Have them dismount on the side *away* from traffic. Know how many cars you have, know the parking capacities of your stopping places, and plan your trip accordingly. Before you move to the next point, indicate what is to be seen along the way, explain the parking plan for the next stop, and if the people are to remain in their cars, tell them so ahead of time. Such procedures enable you to move with greatest dispatch, the least confusion, and with the greatest degree of safety.

Bus Tours.--The guide accompanying a bus usually stations himself in the front where he can direct the driver, and where he can be seen and heard by all the passengers. The interpretive story may be presented while in motion, at stops without dismounting, and on short excursions on foot at strategic points. As on a boat cruise, introduce and explain a feature before it comes into view from the moving bus. Talk about the places you are approaching, not the places you have just passed.

Boat Trips.--A well managed boat trip can be a most satisfying experience. Many factors assist the interpreter toward this end. People are relaxed, no physical effort is required, the participants are gathered into a compact group, and are never separated from the guide. (It should be added that they can't get away from him, either.) The general suggestions for the operation of conducted trips contained in this manual are applicable, and in addition the following aspects of the activity are pertinent.

Boat capacities are limited, and advance registration and reservation may be required. Normally, this responsibility should be assumed by the boat operator.

A brief talk at the boat landing, preparatory to and introducing the subject matter of the excursion, is desirable and provides a reasonable and acceptable delay to accommodate latecomers. In the boat, take a position where you can best be seen and heard. A voice considerably louder than you would normally use is necessary if you are to be heard above a noisy motor. If there are two decks, or if the passengers are otherwise separated into groups, spend some time with each. You are not expected to speak all the time, so between interpretive episodes, circulate, visit around, and show that you are willing and available for questions.

Since the boat is in motion, it is advisable to start talking about a given feature before it comes into prominence, and get to the climax just as it comes into best view.

Historical and Archeological Trips.--In buildings and ruins, as in caves, space limitations are sometimes an important factor. The size of parties, the general plan for displaying the structure, tour routes, and timing must be worked out locally on the basis of use pattern, physical layout, and space limitations. For large parties and for continuous, heavy visitation, it is often necessary to give the interpretive story briefly before entering the house or ruin. Uniformed personnel, posted strategically within the building or circulating among the visitors, can then keep the traffic moving and at the same time provide a certain amount of more detailed on-the-spot interpretation.

Tour routes over battlefields and the like should in general follow a chronological sequence in order to take full advantage of the opportunity for logical development, suspense and anticipation, and climax.

Every conducted trip and every orientation or interpretive talk in prelude to a visit to a historic structure should bring out in appropriate ways the protection theme. Identify the critical protection points, explain how the visitor can cooperate as he visits the structure, and attempt to develop an appreciation that will lead the visitor to accept a personal responsibility for preservation of the feature.

Cave Guiding.--In some respects the most important conducted trip activity of the Service is the cave tour. Cave attendance is approximately double that of the combined totals of all other conducted trips. The general objectives and the general methods and techniques are not particularly different from those on other types of conducted trips, but some unique and unusual problems are involved as well. These stem principally from two factors. First, once a party passes underground, it becomes a captive audience in a very real sense. Secondly, trail pattern and cave size and arrangement impose very inflexible limitations as to maneuverability. The problem of preservation and protection is more acute than in most other conducted trip situations.

Every cave is unique, and the problems of party size, trip plan, timing, and the like must be worked out locally. The following general comments are, however, of wide application:

In conducting a cave tour, be especially alert to the attitudes and responses of your group. If they don't like the way you manage your trip and the interpretation, they can't leave you as they would above ground. Unless you are on your toes all the time, your presentation can quickly become stereotyped and monotonous to you and to the party. Give your people the very best you have. Make your explanations brief and clear. Continuously seek new ways to tell the story. Vary your words, the sequence of ideas, the places where you stop, or the things you point to as examples. Only by seeking new and more effective ways to tell the same old story can you keep your presentation fresh and alive and imaginative. Remember that the story is new to your people. Tell it each time as if its telling is a new and exciting experience for you as well.

Cave size is limited, but cave parties get larger and larger. Know how many people you have, and know how many people each place in the cave will accommodate. You may have to eliminate some stops. When you have a group too large to assemble at any point in the cave, give the general interpretation outside the cave before you enter. Don't talk too long. Give the salient points regarding your tour, the origin of the cave, and the protection of the cave, but skip the details. It is better to generalize, and then to arrange for uniformed personnel to circulate, so as to come face to face with as many members of the party as possible as you move through the cave.

As attendance increases, scheduling and timing of tours becomes an increasingly complex problem. Deviations from a fixed schedule can result in confusion and embarrassment. Manage your own party so

as to conform to schedule, and keep in mind the whereabouts of other parties that may be in the cave at the same time. Strict conformance to schedule is especially important where successive parties must cross paths or retrace a given section of trail, where elevator or other entrance or exit facilities form a bottleneck, or where the coordination of lighting arrangements is a factor.

In most caves, a very few of the visitors are under direct surveillance at a given time. Cave protection must of necessity depend to a very large degree upon the cooperation of the visitors. Develop in the visitor an appreciation which will lead him to take a personal interest in the cave and its preservation. To accomplish this is an important objective of every talk in preparation for a cave tour.

CHAPTER III

IMPROMPTU INTERPRETATION

There is but little truly impromptu interpretation. There are many occasions, however, which through skillful presentation, will appear to be impromptu to the visitor. The 500 people who gather for an illustrated talk are not expecting an impromptu affair, and will certainly be disappointed if the performance is such as to leave this impression. This is exactly the impression sought in many other contacts. Much of the docent service rendered in museums and the informal, interpretive contacts along a trail or at a focal point are most effective when handled in this manner. What may seem impromptu to the visitor, in reality may

require much more preparation and skill on the part of the interpreter than a more formal, scheduled activity.

Throughout the System there are many opportunities for impromptu service as well as for more formal, scheduled programs. Scheduled campfire programs and nature walks are popular and successful in such areas as Mount Rainier and Sequoia because they meet the needs of the more leisurely visitor. The hurried, on-the-move, day-use visitor constitutes an important segment of the total visitation, too, but is not effectively served by fixed-schedule activities. Impromptu services that meet the visitor *where he is* thus play an important role in the over-all program. This type of service is of particular value in many national monuments and historic areas whose visitation is largely day-use.

Of course, we rely very heavily upon museums, wayside exhibits, self-guided trails and highways, and upon literature to provide the area interpretation for these people. In addition, many opportunities can be found or made for extending at least a degree of personal service. The National Park Service is still a human service, not a completely mechanized processing of visitors. Even in those areas which must rely on exhibits and mechanized, self-operating audio-visual aids, as much of the personal contact as possible should be injected in the program.

In such situations the interpreter must first be aware that the visitor he seeks to serve is not expecting a personal interpretive service, and the first problem is that of making initial contact and of stimulating an interest in the impromptu event. The various situations call for different techniques and perhaps a few examples will illustrate methods which have been successful.

The Roving Ranger Naturalist and Historian

One area, conducting a normal, scheduled program, found itself over-run with Sunday visitors who simply spread out in large numbers over the neighboring trails. Ranger naturalists, as available, were assigned to the most used trails. As they approached a small group, perhaps a family group, the naturalist paused long enough to pass the time of day. A question or a comment by the group, and the reply by the ranger naturalist was used as an opportunity to extend the conversation as an informal interpretive activity. The naturalist progressed along the trail with the party, not lecturing, but speaking conversationally and in such a manner as to interest others along the trail to listen in. Usually within a short time 20 or 30 people were gathered. The naturalist then recognized the group as such and continued with some such statement as the following: "Well, we have quite a group. Why don't we all go up this trail together? Perhaps we will find some other things of interest." He continued, perhaps for 20 or 30 minutes, gathering more people all the way, stopping finally at a strategic point, an overlook, falls, or flower meadow. Here he completed his presentation, told the group what was ahead, and excused himself to answer other questions on the spot, or to return down the trail to gather another group.

The important things in the success of this event were:

1. The group was approached informally, never given the idea that the activity was other than casual and unplanned. They just happened to meet a naturalist on the trail who had the time to visit with them for a while.

2. The activity, what was presented, and how it was handled, was as carefully *planned* as any guided trip. The only unplanned portion involved the transition from the subject of initial contact--the original question--to the planned activity.

In another situation *impromptu walks* originated in the museum. Two men participated in half-hour cycles as follows: At a given time the first made an opportunity to give a talk around a relief map. After a brief discussion, long enough to gather a group, he led them to the out-of-doors to see the real thing, and then a short distance along a trail for a better view. Upon concluding this activity, he left his group and returned to take over the information desk in time for a second man to repeat the activity.

This type of service was handled in a somewhat different way in another area. As a rule, the visitor spent only about 30 to 45 minutes in the area, but travel was nearly continuous all day. At the entrance stations each visitor was informed of a museum talk given every hour on the hour. Many visitors then paced their progress--usually prolonging their visit--so as to attend this talk. A five-to-ten-minute talk was given as scheduled, and the group then invited to "go out and see the evidence" during the next 20 minutes. The impromptu talk and guided trip was repeated each hour throughout the day.

In another situation, characterized by a historic house, participation is always on a voluntary non-scheduled basis. When the tour leader is alerted to the approach of an organized group such as a school group, he stations himself in the vicinity of the entrance where he can best intercept

and make first contact with the group leader. With the group leader he works out the arrangements for a tour which will best satisfy the interests, needs, and time requirements of the group. When the guides are engaged with other parties, new arrivals are invited to wait a few minutes for the next tour. If personnel or recorded talk facilities are available, the group may be given an orientation talk while waiting. The tour itself is a carefully planned event, even though the initial contact was an impromptu occasion, and follows the general procedures outlined elsewhere in this manual.

Much of the same procedure is employed in meeting and serving individuals or unorganized groups, and the historian may approach with the inquiry "Is this your first visit to Lee Mansion?" This conversational gambit enables the leader to determine how he may best serve the group. In this, as in all other impromptu activities, it is well to determine early just how much time your visitors would like to devote. You may then plan your trip accordingly.

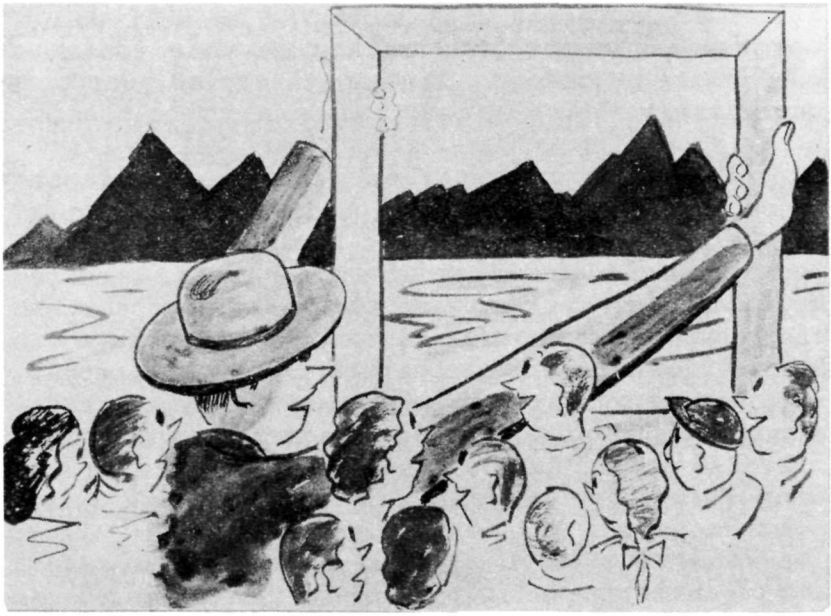
When heavy visitation precludes conducted tours, short talks on the grounds at the entrance, on the portico of a historic house, or in similar locations near the start of a tour route, repeated at intervals, will provide the background for the visitors. Between talks, a very useful service can be provided at strategic points, or while circulating over the tour route, discussing special features, answering questions, and directing visitors onward.

Focal Point Service

The techniques of approach, awakening interest, and of inviting participation are similar in places

where a naturalist or historian posts himself at a strategic focal point such as Artists Point in Yellowstone or Point Park in Chickamauga-Chattanooga. The interpreter, himself taking the initiative, approaches a group casually and in a friendly manner. He employes initial questions and follow-up questions to lead into a planned interpretation. The activity may serve a few people conversationally, or it may develop into a more formal talk or short guided trip for many.

At some focal points some of the people who have assembled may prefer to rely upon their own resources for the enjoyment and appreciation of the scene before them. Respect their wishes by withdrawing the group you are working with to one side, and by observing periods of silence between your cycles of activity.



CHAPTER IV

CONDUCTED TRIP INTERPRETATION

So far we have been concerned with the mechanics of managing a conducted trip. Now let us turn our attention to the equally important matter of handling the interpretive phase of this activity. The general principles of interpretation, some of which are outlined in the publication *Talks,* are applicable, but there are some special and unique factors involved too. The basic problem is that of developing and preserving the structure and unity of the interpretive story--of making it hang together as one story despite the fact that the telling is repeatedly interrupted by the movement of the party from place to place.

The backgrounds and attitudes of the audience enter into the problem. The subject matter itself is a factor. Good planning and complete preparation are essential in achieving this objective, and a great deal depends as well upon the manner of presentation and the techniques employed in telling the story. We shall, then, discuss audience, subject field, planning and preparation, and presentation methods as they contribute to effective conducted trip interpretation.

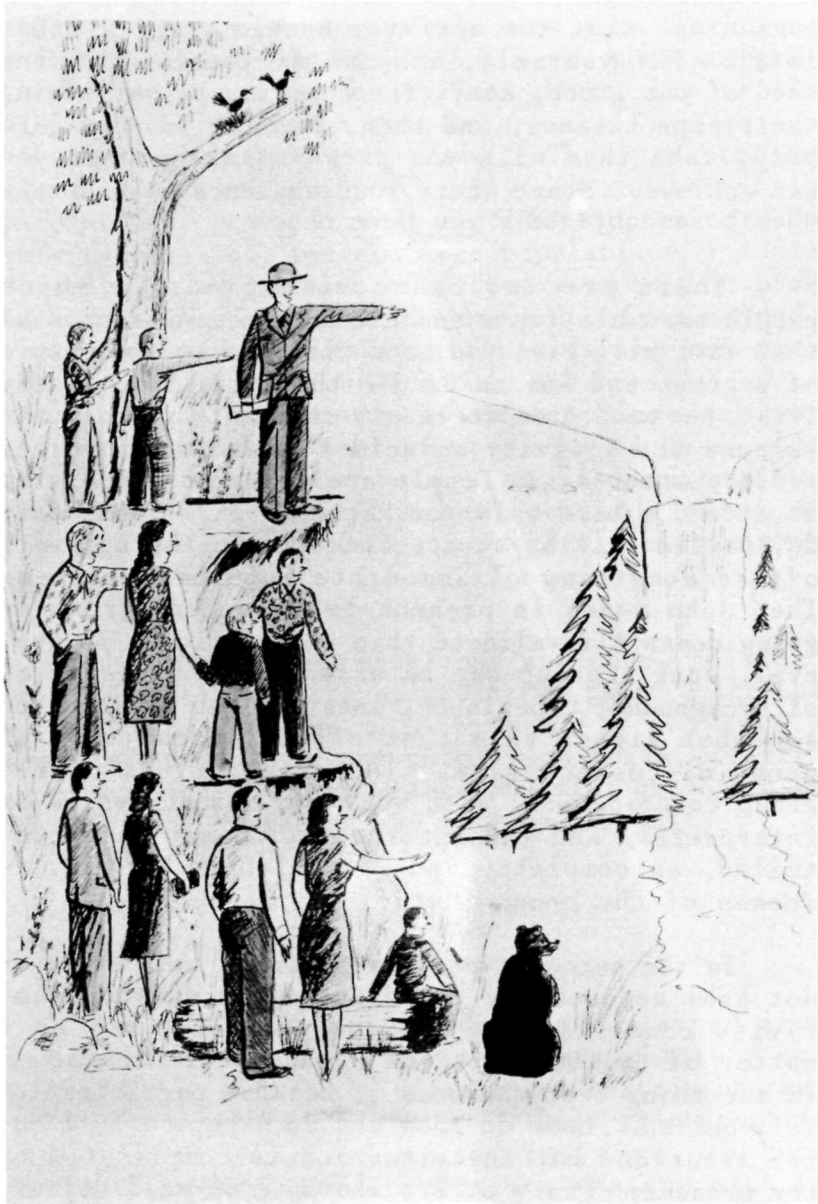
First, however, let us make two suggestions. Again read the publication on *Talks*. The general interpretive concepts, and especially the suggestions for planning an interpretive story, will be of value to you. Secondly, after you have conducted a few groups over a tour route, come back and again read this discussion of conducted trips. Your own experiences will give this discussion more meaning

and you will be able to apply and adapt the material in this manual in new ways to the interpretive job at hand. A conducted trip is a thing of continuous development, and you may take a trip a dozen or more times before you begin to be satisfied with your performance. Insofar as you can profit by the experience of others, and this booklet contains the essence of the experiences of a great many interpreters before you, you can shorten that period of learning and development.

A Conducted Trip is for People

Like any other interpretive activity, a conducted trip should be adjusted in subject material and in method of presentation to the people it serves. You do not cast pearls before swine, and it is equally inappropriate to explain the ABC's to a PhD. Pattern the activity to fit both the backgrounds and the expectations of the group. Correct appraisal of background and experience enables you to couch the interpretation in words and concepts familiar to the listener, and to project ideas into situations familiar to him. It enables you to avoid the attitude of superiority that results in talking down to an audience.

It is just as important to ask "What does the visitor want and expect from this activity?" and to be very realistic in arriving at the answer. Your *standard* trip may be entirely inadequate for a visiting scientific or historical society, and completely beyond acceptance by a high school group out for a field day. This does not mean that your course is alone determined by the desires of your group. You have an objective and a purpose too. It does mean that the interest level and the expectations of the group should be recognized at the



. . . . . .*A GOOD INTERPRETIVE JOB!*

beginning, that the activity should start at that level. Put yourself, insofar as you can, in the mood of the group, start the activity by satisfying their expectations, and then, through your leadership, take them with you to whatever heights you can achieve. Start where your audience *is* and take them to an objective *you* have chosen.

There are two basic situations in which people assemble for a conducted trip. Awareness of this fact will give you good clues as to the nature of a group and how to handle the activity. In the first, the people deliberately choose to participate because the activity coincides with their own immediate interests. People are under no compulsion to attend a bird walk or nature walk. Those that do, participate by choice and because the activity offers something of immediate interest to them. That John Jones is present because Mary Brown is going doesn't invalidate this observation. In general, such a group can be assumed to have a level of background, experience, interest and expectation somewhat higher than that of the second type of group discussed below. The expectations of the group coincide well with your own objectives as an interpreter, and the interpretation may be as detailed, as complete, and as prolonged as the response of the group justifies.

In the second type of situation, the people do not know necessarily in advance just what the activity consists of. They participate, not as a matter of deliberation and choice, but because it is the thing everyone does or because participation is required. Some do know and do expect a full interpretation, but the situation is complicated by the presence of many others who have no well defined expectations. Some of them may merely want to cool

off in a cavern, or to see the view from the top of a fortification. In such situations, the interpreter needs to use to the fullest degree his skills of presentation, and he must be especially sensitive to the reactions of his group. The interpretive story should be as attractively and interestingly presented as possible. In most cases it should be more generalized, perhaps more popularized, and less detailed. Heavy doses of interpretation and prolonged discussion are to be avoided. Long windedness simply means that you are thinking too much about yourself and your subject, and have failed to consider the interests and expectations of your audience. Remember that in most situations of this kind the people have paid a special guide fee. They are entitled to the best possible service, taking into account both your objectives and their expectations.

In summary, appraise your audience, be alert to sense their reactions, and serve their interests as well as your own objectives. If you have a genuine interest in the people you serve, it will be immediately evident to them and will be reflected in a friendly attitude and in good rapport.

The Subject Field and Its Interpretive Characteristics

The National Park Service is concerned with two distinct subject fields--natural history and human history. Each field possesses certain characteristics which facilitate, and others which complicate the solution of an interpretive problem. Subject matter itself conditions the approach to interpretation.

For example, in historic areas the significant theme is so defined as to throw into sharp focus a single episode, person, period of time, or concept. Background, prelude, and postlude only sharpen that focus. The story is often presented in time sequence. Thus, it has inherent organization and unity, it develops logically, and achieves climax. The story hangs together because it is in fact one story. The leader of a tour, exercising ingenuity and imagination, will capitalize to the fullest degree on this favorable characteristic of the historical tour.

By contrast, most scenic-scientific areas deal with a much diversified subject field. Many aspects of many branches of natural science, and often history, may be involved in a single interpretive presentation. Unity and coherence are not innate qualities, but must be achieved by seeking out and utilizing broad concepts such as ecological relationships.

In most scenic-scientific areas, the immediate setting, the items that are at hand and visible, are the objects of primary interest--the canyon, the geyser, a stalactite, tree, or flower. In historic areas, the setting, and the physical objects are present too, but primary interests lie in events of the past. The past events are absent and must be recreated in the minds of the visitors. The battlefield of Gettysburg provides the setting, but the interpreter must help the visitor visualize the military action that occurred in the past. The prehistoric structures are present at Mesa Verde, but must be peopled and brought to life in the imagination of the visitor.

Similarly geological interpretations, based on a present day scene, often involve a whole series of separate and distinct events of the past. Thus, at Grand Canyon the interpreter presents a scene as it exists and is in view today. But to fully understand the scene, the visitor must be helped to visualize the action of forces which, during many distinct periods of the past, created that scene. Geological time sequence is a very difficult concept for most people to grasp. To simplify this concept, the Grand Canyon story often is presented as chapters in the book of time which lies open and exposed in the canyon walls. In other places, geologic time is reduced to a lifetime, a year, or a day--concepts that are scaled to human experience.

Historical and archeological subjects possess another favorable quality of which the skilled interpreter will take full advantage. The story is essentially about people and their activities. People are most interested in other people, and the interpretive story can be given the drama of human interest to a degree not usually possible in other situations.

These general observations merely illustrate that most subject fields do possess characteristics affecting the interpretive presentation. In approaching a new problem, ask yourself this question: What are the factors in this subject field, at this place, and at this time, which may be utilized to strengthen the interpretive plan?

A Conducted Trip is an Illustrated Talk

Like an illustrated talk, a conducted trip interpretation can be either a disjointed, unorganized catalogue of facts, or it may be a well rounded,

unified story. Especially during the planning stages, it is very helpful to consider the similarities between these two activities. Like a talk, a conducted trip should have a plot or theme. It should set the stage and generate interest through a good introduction, it should develop logically and reach an effective conclusion. It may utilize supporting material, suspense, climax, rhetorical question, illustration and other techniques that make an illustrated talk effective. Good planning and complete preparation are fundamental, and the following suggestions toward this end will be found helpful:

Take an Inventory.--First, of course, is to explore the tour route. Familiarize yourself with the route, get an idea of timing, and discover just what the route offers as illustrative materials. Take an inventory, make a list of objects, features, sites, and views. Sometimes these are obvious and fit into a ready-made pattern as on a battlefield tour, a geyser walk, or other special subject tours. In others, a great variety of less obvious and apparently unrelated things compose your list.

Build up a Fund of Facts and Supplemental Information.--Next, find out all you can about the things on your list, not merely names and descriptions. Names, dates, classifications, and events in history are the basic facts. Supplement these with supporting data just as you enliven a talk with story, comparison, or other human interest material. You will never have too much data, and a full fund will enable you to vary the activity for your own greater interest, as well as to meet the varying demands of different audiences.

Define the Plot.--A conducted trip should have a theme or plot just as does a well-organized talk. How else but through a central theme can you achieve unity and logical development, and bring all to a meaningful conclusion? Without this you fall into the same rut as the unprepared speaker who introduces each new picture with the comment, "The next picture shows . ." A theme lifts the activity above the sphere of mere identification, makes it more exciting for you, and gives it more meaning for the visitor.

The significant theme of the area plus all the specific information you have assembled along the tour route will suggest the plot. Your own background and your resourcefulness and imagination come into full play too. Try to express this central idea in a single sentence or short paragraph.

On many trips the story line is self-evident--"How Petrified Wood is Formed," "Ancient Apartment Dwellers at Mesa Verde," "The Battle of Gettysburg." Even these can often be slanted or angled to make a better story. Gettysburg might be presented through the eyes of Meade or Lee. Make the petrified wood story an example of a problem in scientific method, seeking out clues, exploring their meanings, and finally developing an hypothesis. Don't talk about sticks and stones, but populate a ruin or house with human beings. An interpretive presentation does not have to be couched always in the same form as a classroom lecture.

In other situations, a great deal of imagination is called for in devising a plot without creating a forced or artificial situation. For example: A tour route at Mammoth Hot Springs encounters dead formations, hot springs in various stages of

activity, scenic views, geologic features, flowers in season, forests, and certain birds and animals. Mere identification and description of individual features constitute a hodge-podge, purposeless, and disunited presentation. On the other hand, the same observations can be woven into a theme such as "Nature is progressive and exhibits an orderly pattern of change." Each pertinent object is, of course, identified, described, and explained, but in addition, it is given relationship to the entire scene. The basic theme ties the whole together, and gives it purpose and meaning. Long after the participants have forgotten the name of the flower, the name of a formation, or the temperature of the hot spring, they will remember and will be stimulated to look for other evidences of order and change in nature.

Make an Outline of the Trip.--Following the definition of theme or story line, the next step is to consider how and when the various items on your inventory will be used to unfold the plot. In this, an outline is just as useful as it is for a formal talk. Keep in mind both the story line and the order in which the illustrative materials are encountered along the trail. You are under no obligation, however, to point out everything seen from a trail, or to interpret the *first* pine tree encountered. Exercise your freedom of selection both as to *what* you will use, and *when* you will use it. The illustrative objects will not always occur in the logical sequence demanded by your outline. Perhaps you can alter the development scheme, or change your route of travel to improve the sequence. But do not be too concerned if you cannot develop a purely logical sequence. A conducted trip story does not have to be as formally organized as does a platform lecture. Nor does everything you see

have to fit into the outline of your story. You do have a basic story to tell, and certain objects you see illustrate and develop that story. But there are side trips into other fields too. For example, perhaps you have planned the trip so as to develop the story of soil--its formation from rock, its first plants, its enrichment, its protection by plant cover, its function as a regulator of water supply, and the dependence of life upon it. True, almost everything you see might be related to this theme, but to avoid dragging everything into the picture, when you see a deer, drop the soil theme and talk just about the deer. Likewise, on a historical tour, or archeological excursion, the main theme is well defined. That does not prevent you, at suitable times, from mentioning conspicuous trees or flowers, or from pointing out interesting features unrelated to your basic story.

Discover the Conservation and National Park Aspects.--Now explore your activity for logical places to bring out and to illustrate related aspects of national park philosophy, objectives, use, and conservation. Keep in mind the dual objectives of interpretation--to reveal the facts and principles of natural and human history, and to do so in such a way as to serve the protection and conservation objectives of the Service.

A Conclusion.--Plan to bring the activity to a conclusion at a dramatic site, or an especially interesting or significant place. Don't let the event just disintegrate spontaneously. Make the end a climax. If the conclusion is at a dramatic scene, let the visitors get their fill of that scene first. Then, when attention swings back your way, bring the activity to its conclusion.

Summarize what you have discovered along the way, complete your theme, bring out the conclusions toward which your discussions have pointed, satisfy the suspense which has been created, or develop the inspirational aspects of the adventure. The following example, even though of limited applicability to other areas, will illustrate a conclusion that is both climactic and inspirational.

A very simple, natural, and most effective climax is reached at the end of a guided trip at Pipestone National Monument. Very casually during the trip, anticipation is developed for "the most beautiful and significant sight in America." The climax of the trip is reached as the party emerges from the limited view of the trail and, while the interpreter takes full advantage of the opportunity to comment on the significance of the area and of the national parks to America, the American flag comes into view. This sort of thing is not corny, forced, or emotional. Handled simply and with dignity, and related to the tone of the trip as a whole, it is most impressive and is certainly well received.

Now you have a plan and are adequately prepared. You are ready to meet your group and to put the interpretive plan to work. The balance of this discussion has to do with your actual presentation of the story as you meet your group and conduct them along the tour route.

A Conducted Trip is a Story in Serial Form

On the trail, the pattern of movement breaks up an interpretive story into separate parts. You stop, talk awhile, then proceed to another place to resume your talk. Even though you may have a good

outline and a basic theme, the tendency is strong to permit the interpretive story to become a series of short stories, each complete but not necessarily related to the whole. A reader of a serial is motivated to read the next issue by interest generated in the current one, particularly by the suspense that is established by the development of unresolved situations just before he reads "to be continued." Use the same technique. Consider a conducted trip, not as an anthology of short stories, but as a serial story. Each episode is a completion of the one preceding, and a build-up leading to the next one, and each episode is related to a general plot that ties the whole together.

Drawing an analogy from the science of physics, a conducted trip can be thought of as a cycle of interpretation superimposed upon a cycle of movement. Keep the two cycles "out of phase." Begin the interpretive cycle with the introduction of a new idea *before* you move. At the next stop, complete the interpretive cycle, and make the transition to the second idea, again before the party moves on. Thus, the conclusion of an interpretive episode never coincides with the time to move, and there is never a logical place for people to lose interest or to drop out. Always, there is some unfinished business. Thus, you maintain suspense and develop anticipation for what lies ahead.

A Conducted Trip is a Directed Conversation

When you actually get on the trail with your party, forget the idea that a conducted trip is an illustrated talk. That was all right while you were planning how you would handle the event, but now you want to assume the attitude that you are

participating in a conversation. *A conducted trip is a directed conversation,* not a speaker and audience situation. Even though circumstances compel you to do all the talking, the conversational attitude is a good one to assume. It helps you to identify yourself as part of a group, not a speaker before an audience, and to more consciously seek to secure participation of your group. Stimulate people to say something, do something, or think with you about something. These are the techniques of conversation, of participation. You will develop your own, but the following techniques are suggestive:

In the introduction, present a problem or a question to be answered--"Why does this stream flow, even though there is no melting snow to feed it?" "How are we able to date these ruins so exactly?" "What did these people do for water?" The purpose is to suggest the general theme, perhaps, but it also is to make people think and to stimulate curiosity and anticipation in what lies ahead. You point out a specific feature or raise a point, the full understanding of which will be revealed only as you complete the trip.

You can use questions that you ask or that are asked you along the trail to bring out some of your points. Sometimes you try to get the answers from the group, sometimes you answer directly, sometimes you let the answer be revealed by the objects encountered. Don't behave as if you are the only one who knows the answers. You may even feign ignorance part of the time when questions are asked you.

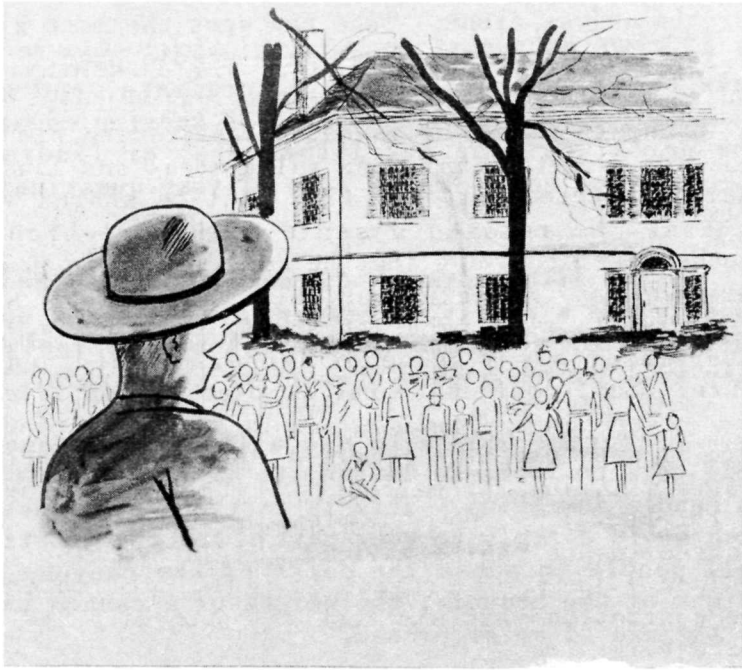
Make a game of your progress along the trail. The youngsters that crowd close behind you, especially, can be kept interested by a side activity

for themselves alone.--"Who can spot the most kinds of trees?" "Find the first five-needle pine." Or, make the youngsters deputy naturalists, and give them some responsibilities such as keeping count of the party, passing out literature, or finding a specimen for you. Direct some of your questions to them.

Use a little drama.--"Around the next bend we usually see a family of beaver. Let's sneak up to where we can see them without showing ourselves. They will put on a good show if we are careful."

Encourage people to use all of their senses. Tell them to look, to listen, to smell, to taste, or to handle something. This is participation just as much as is a reply to your part of the conversation. Tell people to guess the depth of the canyon, the height of the Sequoia, the weight of a cannon ball, or the age of an arrowhead.

Let the people discover some things for themselves. Perhaps you have built up to the story of the water ouzel. Lead the group to a place where you know one will be seen, then let someone else see it before you do. Remember, you are not trying to prove how clever you are; your job is to help people to see for themselves, to pick up new facts, new ideas, and new concepts.



CHAPTER V

THE INTERPRETER

There are general principles and rules to follow in composing music or in painting a picture, but there is no formula for the creation of a masterpiece. The artist himself counts for more than the rules. So it is with an interpretation. There are the facts, the general principles, methods and techniques, but the interpreter is also an important part of the final presentation. His is the opportunity of welding the facts into a unified story and of adapting the methods to the audience and to his own personality. There is ample need for the exercise of imagination, resourcefulness, and originality.

Other traits, too, characterize the successful interpreter. He is sincere in his presentation, and sincerity comes from having valid ideas and believing in them. He is enthusiastic, and his enthusiasm results from having valid ideas and finding them so interesting that they must be shared with others. He retains a sense of humor which is another way of saying that he sees things in proper perspective. A zealot has enthusiasm, and a kind of sincerity, but lacks perspective. Lastly, the interpreter has a sense of leadership and confidence. Self-confidence can be overdone or assumed as a cover for inadequacy, and is then reflected as egotism and conceit. A proper sense of leadership starts with full preparedness. It is strengthened by the knowledge that people want leadership, and the confidence on the part of the interpreter that he is qualified to provide it. It is climaxed by the conviction that his task is worthwhile and important.

Interpretation is important. To provide the background of science or history, to assist in the development of honest concepts in conservation and American tradition, to stimulate an avocational interest in the subject field, or merely to add to the immediate pleasure of a visitor are works that are well worth the doing. Their accomplishment can bring a very high measure of personal satisfaction to the interpreter. It is a privilege worthy of the highest measure of performance.

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