

# Interpretation of Parks Through Use of Visual Aid Materials

By H. RAYMOND GREGG, Chief, Interpretive Branch National Park Service. Presented at Great Lakes Park Institute, Pokagon State Park, Ind.



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EDITOR'S NOTE: *This article comprises most of the illustrated talk given by Mr. Gregg at the Great Lakes Training Institute at Pokagon, which accounts for the style of writing in part of the text.*

The legislation creating the National Park Service, and that establishing most of the areas administered by it uses the terminology "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" or some close paraphrase of it. The same is true of most state, county, and metropolitan parks and park systems. I was interested in reviewing the 1951 Annual Report of the Department of Conservation of the Forest Preserve of Cook County, Illinois, to learn that the statutory authority for the Preserves specifies, "the recreation, education and enjoyment of the people" as basic purposes for its existence. Fortunately, it didn't say that these things have to be taken one at a time. In fact, no visitor will escape some degree of participation in all of these benefits on any particular visit, however single his purpose.

The basic character of an area, the manner of its development, the aids provided to direct and assist use, and the background and intent of the visitor, together determine the relative weight of the user's return in terms of recreation, education, and enjoyment. Sometimes the resources or the boundaries we have chosen or have been forced to accept for parks have left much to be desired, creating problems before use begins, but in the main, nature and the march of history have pretty much predetermined the basic character of our parks, except in the case of completely or largely artificial developments. The manner of development and the aids we provide to direct and assist use are in our hands as park administrators, park planners, and park interpreters. It is surprising how much we can do about the backgrounds and intents of the user, if we use wisely and well the tools of development and guidance in which latter

term I encompass public relations and on-the-area interpretation. There is a lot of food for thought here of greatest, if elemental, importance to those responsible for policy and program in park systems.

I shall try to discuss aids to visitors of parks in terms of their contribution to greater enjoyment. At the beginning, I find it impossible to disentangle optimum enjoyment from understanding — which probably is pretty close to education; and I am convinced that real enjoyment of a park is recreation in its best sense of re-creation.

## SIGNS

Perhaps the basic visual aid to visitor enjoyment that we may employ is the directional sign. It is most gratifying to know where you are and where you are going. I have never seen a happy child who knew that he was lost, and it is hard to think of anything good about being lost at any time or age. People also dislike learning later that they missed something they wanted to see because there was no sign, or because it was so poorly signed that they missed it. A single sign can have a lot to do with happiness or unhappiness.

The mania against intrusions upon the landscape often causes us to lean over backward in eliminating signs or in so blending them with the landscape that their function is lost. Oblivion belongs to seekers of Nirvana, not to the business of giving information through signs. Size, brevity, and understandability are criteria which measure the usefulness of directional signs.

The landscapers and designers can take over from there in creating harmony short of camouflage.

A special type of directional sign is the orientation map. It may be designed for installation at a park entrance, at a roadside trail center, or in an area of visitor concentration. The character of this device may range from quite accurately scaled maps, mounted under glass, to illustrated panels and "routed" wood signs.

The identification sign has great importance to the visitor. For many people, the name of something or a brief answer to the implied "What is it?" is sufficient. For others, identity opens the door of curiosity that leads to further enjoyment and learning through observation and reading. For still others, a sign may be a most specific visual aid, in the form of a title for a home movie he plans to inflict upon his neighbors next winter. In each instance, the sign has served as an aid to enjoyment; not necessarily limited to the first reading of it.

Identity imperceptibly expands into explanation or interpretation in this type of sign, where words can adequately point up the character of the thing described. Such signs can be attractive, less obtrusive, just as effective, and less expensive than more elaborate exhibits for many types of features.

People like to know the names of geographic features, whether they ever remember them or do anything about it. The orientation device is a valuable visual aid for this purpose. Usually it is a simple azimuth circle with sight lines to peaks or points, or a graphic display superimposing names upon landscape sketches or photographs. A most unusual specialized orientation device is one employed at Logan Pass in Glacier National Park. It meets the problem of crowding around single orientation devices by distributing directional markers bearing identities and elevations of peaks visible from a short circle trail of about a hundred yard radius. Within a few minutes, every visitor can circulate around it, and identify for himself every significant topographic feature of the surrounding country. The most elaborate type of orientation device used in our parks is the parapet-type overlook such as those at Crater Lake and Grand Canyon. These contain fixed exhibits interpreting the landscapes with the aid of telescopic selection of landscape



National Park Service Photo

**“Another employment of signs is the cultivation of use . . . an invitation to Hell . . . in Lassen Volcanic National Park has had a lot of takers”**

or geological features, and associated displays which the visitor can use without guidance at any time; there is connected a small topic museum, supplementing the story told by the parapet exhibit; a third feature is the use of the commanding point occupied to conduct scheduled orientation lectures.

Another employment of signs is the cultivation of use or, less politely stated, promotion, advertising, or “come-on” signs. Even though it is about to split its infinitives, this log cross-section draws attention, and leads many people to a very pleasant experience at the Sinnott Memorial at Crater Lake National Park. An invitation to Hell is never particularly inviting, but that to Bumpass’ Hell in Lassen Volcanic National Park has had a lot of takers. I want to show you an interesting contrast in the use of signs inviting use of trails, both within the same park. Here, in this picture, we see a maze of names which, however necessary for the information of someone who knows where he is going, and for getting started right, hardly serve as alluring invitations to trail travel. By contrast *this* trail sign, presenting attractive photographic compositions of destination points, is a tremendous stimulus to trail into the high Sierras of Sequoia National Park.

Fortunately, we are unable to provide every visitor with a first-class for-

est fire to watch. By use of signs, however, we can make him aware of the aftermath of fire, and solicit his help in protecting the forests. This kind of sign might be called a “moralizer.” If it works, it may help provide green forests rather than barren wastes for future visitors to enjoy.

Another problem in some parks is injury by bears, almost invariably at the invitation of the visitor who, when apprehended for this violation of regulations, pleads ignorance of the danger. At Glacier National Park we have tried the Burma Shave technique. We aren’t sure whether it has helped, but you must admit that it is a cute idea, and it serves as notice of danger in its whimsical way. Then, there is the “share-the-wealth” sign, soliciting the visitor’s coöperation in protection of trailside wildflowers. This may be done in the more brusque “Do Not Pick” approach, or the more suggestively worded: “Please Leave the Flowers for Others to Enjoy.” Our experience in the National Capital Parks is that, at least, the sign of the latter type survives better. Another example of the “moralizer” is this small exhibit sign at the entrance to trails across highly erodable meadows in the Paradise Valley section of Mount Rainier National Park. By explaining the cumulative damage of using cut-offs of the trail, it is hoped we can curb such practice to the benefit of the landscape. Another twist was

the installation of a coin box on the identification sign at Morning Glory Pool in Yellowstone, inviting people to put coins there rather than in the pool. While this neither stopped the practice of tossing coins and other objects into the pool, nor balanced the Federal budget, it did make inroads in both directions.

The enjoyment of natural wonders depends upon the person and is a matter of degree. The great groves in Sequoia National Park are esthetically pleasing. At distant view, these trees belie their immensity. Walking among the massive trunks helps bring a better comprehension of the size. An elemental visual aid to the concept of size such as a tunnel through a tree trunk, while not made for the purpose, is most valuable in giving scale. The labelling of well-known historic events upon a cross-section of one of these great trees, in this case on a Coast Redwood at Muir Woods National Monument, can give a sense of age with reference to that of man. This is an example of a visual aid directly designed to create appreciation and, with it, enjoyment.

#### TRAIL GUIDES AND EXHIBITS

The roadside or roadside exhibit, distinguished principally by location, is a widely used visual aid in interpretation of features in the parks. It may be a simple thing like this explanatory exhibit at a tuff cliff in Yellowstone, or the more elaborate drive-in double-faced panel exhibit such as the one at Obsidian Cliff, in the same park.

Driving along the highway in Glacier National Park, I am impressed by a great valley off to the south and a massive sheet of ice lying against a shadowed wall. Beside the road I find the scene repeated and the story of Jackson Glacier interpreted in an exhibit panel. Through this exhibit I begin to get an idea of the size and power of this scaleless mass of ice off there in the distance. Having learned that these roadside exhibits tell enjoyable stories, I see another and stop. Without its presence I might well have passed without knowing that, clearly visible on the river bank just below, there is a mineral lick frequented by mountain goats. Perhaps it is my good fortune that a nanny and her kid are just scrambling down the slope as we arrive, and I enjoy a rare treat in seeing them. From the exhibit, I learn something about these animals and their habits.

To many persons traveling the trails of Grand Canyon National Park, rocks are just rocks: perhaps different in color, shape, or size but, still, just plain garden-variety rocks. Some of these rocks are far from being ordinary. For instance, the Kaibab Trail crosses beds where fossils of so-called seed ferns occur. Under glass in an attractive Exhibit-in-place, some of these fossils are preserved just where they were buried hundreds of millions of years ago. Accompanying illustrations tell the story of the age in which they lived and picture them as they grew. These beds of rock become most interesting and enjoyable once the visitor learns of their nature and the ancient story they tell.

The Self-Guiding Trail is a visual aid to discovering and understanding the salient features along the way. The conventional treatment of the trailside, for years, has been installation of labels of various sorts and all degrees of cuteness and complexity to identify things and give capsule descriptions of them. Such a self-guiding trail involves many problems of preparation, installation, and upkeep, if well-done interpretations are given. The use of trail-guide leaflets, keyed to numbered markers, is rapidly replacing the older method on most of the self-guiding trails in the National Park System. The leaflets are dispensed free, or for a nominal sum, usually right at the trail entrance. The honor system is



National Park Service Photo

**“In an attractive exhibit-in-place (in Grand Canyon National Park) . . . fossils are preserved just where they were buried hundreds of millions of years ago”**

widely used where personnel is not regularly on duty in the vicinity of the trail. Oddly enough, it has worked very well. The leaflet makes possible the use of photographic and outline illustration to aid interpretation of the features, far more effectively than it can be done with the usual types of trailside label. The small numbered marker offers a minimum attraction and target for vandals and, if removed or damaged, is easily replaced.

The motorist passing through a desolation of dead trees and jumbled boulders in Mount Rainier National

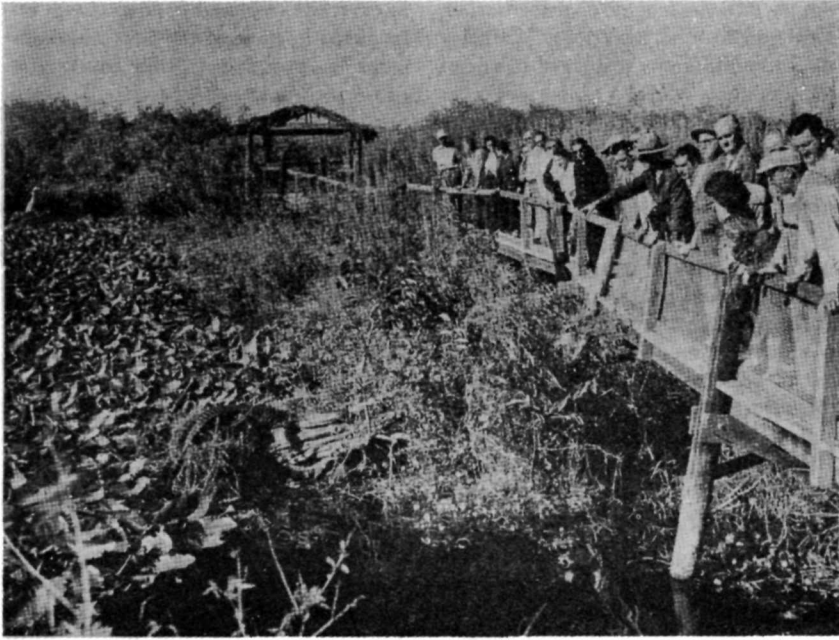
Park is almost certain to wonder “What happened here?” To answer this question, a roadside exhibit tells the story of the devastating flood and mudflows of October, 1947, which buried the lower valley of Kautz Creek under ten to twenty feet of rock debris. A novel nature trail starts from the roadside exhibit. A guide leaflet is dispensed from a handy container located about a hundred feet from the road to avoid wasteful removal by others than those taking the trail. The visitor walks about a quarter-mile loop through the bruised, smothered forest. By referring to the numbered stakes, he can read from the leaflet and from the natural evidences at hand, the story of the flood’s damage and Nature’s beginnings in the slow process of revegetation and the ultimate reforestation of this area. Even though dusty, this trail is an enjoyable one for those with a grain of curiosity about the unusual.

The Anhinga Trail in Everglades National Park is unique in that it features animal life, although there is no special treatment or confinement of the creatures described. Part of the trail course is an elevated catwalk over marsh and pond areas taking the visitor right into the heart of territory frequented by alligators and other reptiles, fish, occasionally mammals, and a great variety of birds. A mimeographed leaflet, and sketches, photographs and descriptions mounted along the catwalk railing and beside the trail, make possible the identification of many of the wild creatures just as they are



National Park Service Photo

**Obsidian Cliff roadside exhibit in Yellowstone interprets the story of a local geological feature. It is in effect a unit of a decentralized museum system in the park**



National Park Service Photo by Abbie Rowe

The unique Anhinga Trail in Everglades National Park, with catwalk right through habitat of alligators and a great variety of birds, is popular for both self-guiding and conducted trips. Here, an alligator poses indifferently for his guests

seen. This trail is rapidly becoming one of the most-used installations in this sub-tropical park.

The self-guiding idea has been adapted to road trips in some of the parks, employing guidebooks keyed to mileage posts, or to numbered roadside signs such as this one in the Devastated Area in Lassen Volcanic National Park. The guidebook tells the story of landscapes, geological features, vegetation, historic structures or events, and other things of interest. Here for example, we can see a visitor stopping to examine and read an algae reef formation in ancient rocks beside the Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier National Park. She is getting a great measure of satisfaction from learning about these prehistoric algae — distant ancestors or relatives of the great masses of “seaweeds” that drift upon our modern shores and clog the Sargasso Sea.

#### THE INTERPRETIVE STAFF

The personal services of the interpretive staffs of the National Park Service are by odds the most effective aids to greater enjoyment of the parks. Although it is by no means the rule, occasionally a naturalist looks good enough to be, in himself, a visual aid to something or other! Obviously, these services can never reach the volume

of people that can use self-guiding and self-explanatory devices. However, the directness of conversation, the sense of personal participation for the visitor through two-way communication on the guided trip, and the eyewitness quality of the campfire talks and illustrated lectures given by historians and naturalists, are benefits to be obtained in no other way. Through the eyes of the leader, the eyes of the

visitor are made more observant; relationships of things previously overlooked become apparent; the enthusiasm of the leader infects his party; the world around becomes meaningful, inviting, and enjoyable. New horizons of interest open up interests that carry over to the fields, stream courses, woods, and waysides back home, stimulating years of pleasant outdoor experiences and explorations ahead as a result of participation under the leadership of a first-class naturalist. You'll find these survivors of our nature walks roaming the trails of your state and county and metropolitan parks, having more fun than they ever did before, and doing your parks little harm. You would do well to find them, help them swell their numbers, and from them draw leadership for a growing use of your parks for volunteer-led nature study activities. Even with its professional staff of naturalists, National Capital Parks has made much and excellent use of voluntary leadership.

Our great national parks and monuments are in themselves outdoor museums of the highest order, replete with exhibits of absorbing interest. Even so, the museum or interpretive center is an important and popular institution in many of these areas.

Through Rockefeller grants, excellent but long since inadequate, museums were built in Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks before the public works period of the middle and late thirties. Other excellent museums, notably in some of the historic areas



National Park Service Photo

“The museum serves as enlargement and recapitulation of field experience.”  
Fishing Bridge Museum, Yellowstone National Park, built with a Rockefeller grant

of the East, such as the one at Morristown National Historical Park, were benefits of the Depression Era. But, as often as not, we have had to improvise in developing our museum program. At Rocky Mountain National Park, the recreation hall of a lodge purchased and dismantled in the private lands acquisition program became the principal park museum. It is far from perfect for the purpose, but it has served well, and in addition, its main exhibit hall has been used regularly as an indoor lecture room when campfire programs in a nearby amphitheater are rained out. At Lava Beds National Monument, an old garage was made into one of the most remarkable and modern little museums to be found in the National Park System.

How the museum can serve as enlargement and recapitulation of field experience in the park is well illustrated at Mesa Verde. Walking through stone cities such as Spruce Tree House, silent for almost seven hundred years, one can sense the antiquity of the place and vaguely reconstruct, from the evidences, the way of life during the periods of habitation. But back in the park museum, the magnificent small-scale dioramas include one which re-creates the peopled town of Spruce Tree House, by the aid of which the actual scene takes on more complete meaning. Other dioramas provide realistic retrospective visits with Developmental Pueblo, Basketmaker, and even earlier peoples, whose abundant but less obvious works are over-looked by many visitors until they learn about them from these dioramas and other exhibits in the museum.

In addition to the elaborate diorama, a museum may contain exhibits as simple as a few cut wildflowers labeled to help the visitor identify the species currently most conspicuous. Attractive natural displays such as wildflowers, often completely unfamiliar, are prone to invoke in the traveler the question, "What flower is that?" To find the answer in the museum is a pleasant surprise.

Between these extremes, our exhibits employ a wide range of visual techniques and materials. Simple flatwork may be used, for example, to depict a series of geological events; sculptures, reproductions, or miniatures may be added to give the third dimension to the exhibit; and still other displays bring actual objects of nature or an-

tiquity into the scheme of presentation. Few people who have met "Esther," the Indian mummy displayed in one of the cases at Mesa Verde, will ever forget this smiling lady out of the past. She is something a little more personal than pottery, turkey feathers, and cold stone objects.

#### MODELS AND MAPS

Relief maps are used in many ways in the national parks, most frequently at the museums. For instance, at Fort McHenry, a model of Baltimore Harbor in 1814 helps the visitor visualize the relation of the Fort to the City and to the bombarding British fleet. Using this model as a visual aid, the historians are able to impart a vivid understanding of what took place at Fort McHenry, and give new importance and meaning for the listener to the setting in which Francis Scott Key composed the "Star-Spangled Banner."

The electric map is another device useful for self-service by the visitor as an aid to museum lectures. By using a succession of labeled switches, the visitor activates lighting on the map which outlines the movements of troops, a sequence of events, or the locations of related actions. In some cases, such maps have been synchronized with tape recordings to provide a self-telling story. A somewhat similar

interpretive technique now being introduced in some of the park museums is the use of a Selectroslide continuous projector with synchronized sound tape recordings to present self-operating brief illustrated lectures. The Selectroslide projector, with remote control over the rotation of the drum which changes the slides, is sometimes used for regular illustrated lectures enabling the speaker to stand before his machine, and operate without the assistance of a projectionist.

Elsewhere, reconstructions from known plans or accounts provide visual reminders of past events or personalities. The reconstructed rude huts, the field hospital, and other structures in Jockey Hollow at Morristown National Historical Park help us picture the hardships endured by the ill-equipped and hungry Revolutionary forces through the bitter winters spent there. Earthworks and battery positions of the Civil War and Revolution (such as the reconstructed Grand French Battery at Yorktown in Colonial National Historical Park) give a far better picture of what took place than was possible from previously existing eroded remnants in woods, pastures, or cornfields, marked only by descriptive signs or commemorative plaques.

Tumacacori National Monument is



Fred Harvey Photo

Relief models help orient visible features of a landscape. At Yavapai Point in Grand Canyon National Park, a ranger-naturalist uses the model to illustrate a point in his interpretation of the geological story of the canyon

an example of another way of interpreting an epoch of history. This early Spanish Mission in Southern Arizona would require expensive and time-effacing changes to restore it to the appearance of its flourishing days. Restored, it would be but another of a goodly number of Missions in the Southwest and in California that have been so treated. It better reflects its antiquity and is impressively picturesque as a stabilized partial ruin. In the modern museum, separate from the Mission structures, a model re-creates the appearance of the establishment at its prime. A perfectly marvelous diorama, complete to the last detail, with even a background of sacred music, transports the visitor to the days when the Indian knelt in worship of the new-found God brought to him by the brave Padres. These and other exhibits give added meaning and dramatic quality to the eroded Mission structure standing out there, as seen through the plate glass of the great window of the museum.

#### LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENTS ENHANCE

Some engineering and landscape developments enhance the visual enjoyment of a scene. The visitor who first enters the Yosemite Valley from the Wawona road enjoys an unforgettable experience. After plunging into the darkness of a tunnel in the mountain-side, without previous intimation of what awaits him, he is struck with a delightful but almost staggering impact as one of the great landscapes of America zooms into composition through the ragged arch of the East Portal. A quite different esthetic quality and mood is imparted to the landscape at intervals along the Blue Ridge Parkway and in certain sections of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. An occasional restored mountain cabin, a split rail fence, or a water-mill flavors the scene with rusticity, inviting understanding of a way of life of mountain people whose roots lie back of the Revolution, deep in the ridges and valleys along the Appalachian Chain. These are subtle, but none-the-less effective visual aids to enjoyment.

#### INSPIRATIONAL VALUES

Monuments? Memorials? What stirring thoughts and heartfelt thrills have gone through the minds and hearts of the newly-arrived or the newly-returned in passing the impressive



National Park Service Photo

**"The electric map is another device useful for self-service or as an aid to museum lectures." Manassas National Battlefield Park**

Statue of Liberty National Monument, holding aloft her symbolic torch. More people visit Lincoln Memorial in Washington than any other of the National Park System. Here, the inspiration, insight, and skill of Daniel Chester French have created the image of a kindly, humble man that somehow personifies at once human greatness, beneficence, and compassion. Upon the walls of this temple are Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, and the simple forthright words spoken at Gettysburg. In this hallowed setting, "Four score and seven years ago" is more than words of calculation, or the apt phrase of an orator; it is the opening of a message that suddenly means more than it ever meant before. One leaves this memorial more humble, and warmer within. How truly the tremendous visitation here, and the great patriotic inspiration that flows from this place, confirm the inscription: "in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever."

Many of the great inspirational values of the national parks do not often come to the visitor directly through the physical aids and devices we provide; devices designed to help them understand the nature of, and appreciate the overt importance of, the features the parks protect and pre-

serve. Such higher values are more *personal* returns, perhaps found through contemplation, or through sympathetic communication with those who have grasped and cherish those values.

Three men saw the great Sequoia trees of the Sierras. One, with foot on the clutch, the car in gear, the motor running, leaned out the window, looked and said "Gosh, isn't that something," then turned to his wife, and asked, "Now, what do we see next?"

A second man, reading the dimensions of the General Sherman Tree, carefully looked it over, and became engrossed in calculating the board feet it contained and how many houses could be built from it.

The third observer was a gentler soul named Edward Markham, who wrote:

"These mighty trees belong to the silences and the millenniums. Some of them have seen a hundred human generations rise, give off their little clamors, and perish. They chide our pettiness; they rebuke our impiety. They seem, indeed, to be forms of immortality standing here among the transitory shapes of time."

Allowing for possible minor difference in visual acuity, I think we can assume that all three of these men saw the same thing! Yes, seeing is not

done with the eye alone. Some need visual aid.

Much is said of visual aids these days, referring to visual props for our limited spatial reach and powers of visualization. These are vitally important in their place, and I have spoken of their use and paid them due respect. But, here, I want to emphasize that in receiving the greatest benefits of our parks for man, what most of us need are aids to *vision*.

In this allegory of the Big Trees, the first man *saw* the trees, but had no vision of them. The second man at least grasped their physical proportions, but the spinning wheels of his merchant mind drowned out the softer voice of inspiration that reached the ear of Edward Markham. The grand sweep of significance, created with words from the soul of this sensitive man, partake of the eternal verities. He really *saw*, he truly *appreciated*, and he most certainly *enjoyed* the Sequoias.

Few of us will ever attain the keenness of spiritual receptivity or the powers of expression to realize what we inwardly feel and say it well, as Edward Markham has done. Yet most of us have the capacity to share his feeling because he has given us great but simple words we can understand and use to conjure from our storehouse of experience the emotional

play which imparts to us the spirit of the words. We do not do this consciously, as we call to mind the multiplication tables in solving a problem. No! We are brought imperceptibly from the subconscious to conscious in the association of our inner thoughts with things we are seeing with our eyes or hearing with our ears. Without the spoken or written words, or the vividness of imagery, we might never be started on this process and be the poorer for it.

We relatively inarticulate people need help in some degree to find the words and thoughts which frame our feelings. The interpretive services of the naturalists and historians in the areas administered by the National Park Service are, in the finest sense, examples of the aids to such vision — the aids of which I have spoken. The indispensibility of personal services rests upon human *entente* which selectively provides the words, suggests the experience relations, and imparts the subtler acceptance through which people from all walks of life and levels of comprehension, receive and understand the messages inherent in the wonders they behold in the parks.

As a case in point, I think of people who arrive at Yavapai Point in Grand Canyon National Park, often without foreknowledge, just in time to join an

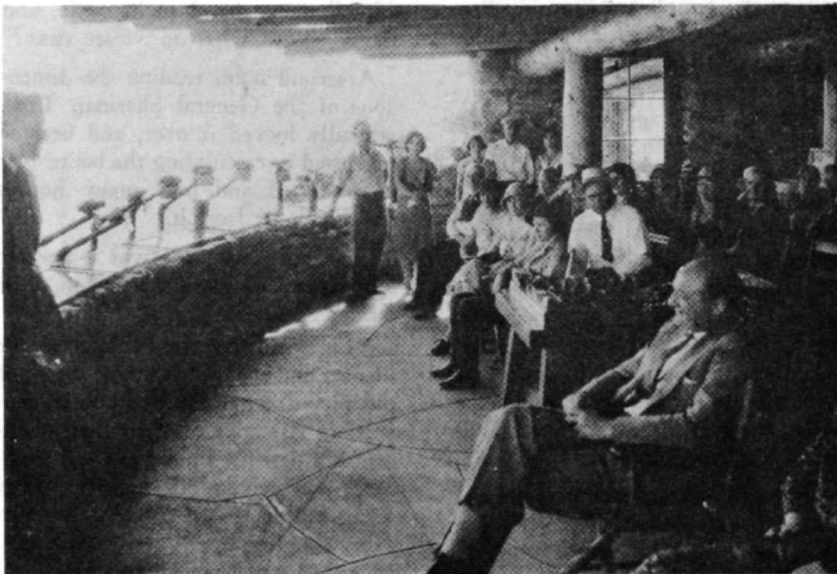


National Park Service  
Photo by Abbie Rowe

**Memorials to great personalities, events, or such intangibles as freedom provide effective visualization of ideas or principles. More people visit Lincoln Memorial in Washington than any other unit of the National Park System**

assembly audience for the naturalist's interpretation of the Canyon. Perhaps the interest is entirely casual, like that of the little boy in Saroyen's *Human Comedy*, who saw a theater queue and joined it because he was lonely. Then, as the talk proceeds, by word, by inflection, by gesture, by simple analogy but, eminently, by leading the human eye to the sesame words in the story written by Nature upon the impressive landscape before him, the naturalist opens the eyes of his audience to see but unseen things, and subtly sets man in perspective against the vastness of time and events unfolded there. Unaware of it at first, the listener begins to feel an inward life, like a swelling tide, raising him to new heights of vision, and to a consciousness that here he has experienced a great moment in his life. He finds a new sense of harmony with the great whole of an infinite Nature of which he is part. An inspired look at his world and himself has made him a wiser, happier man.

Don't tell me of mineral riches or water storage capacities, nor their benefit to man's frenzied seeking for material things. Man's inspiration is the highest use of the Grand Canyon, or of Yosemite, and of the other truly great things of God and man which we have reserved to ourselves as parks and monuments and memorials.



National Park Service Photo

Using the Grand Canyon as his text, "the naturalist opens the eyes of his audience to see but unseen things, and subtly sets man in perspective against the vastness of time and events unfolded there"