

# Chapter Four

## World War and Its Wake

1942 - 1955

New Deal programs completed the tourism infrastructure envisioned by early Grand Canyon administrators but also hastened national recovery, such that by the late 1930s visitors once again strained the limits of park amenities.<sup>1</sup> The National Park Service planned to persist with its proven strategies to attract and accommodate tourists, but was once again interrupted by world war and altered national priorities. The war itself caused tourism to drop more precipitously and bottom more deeply than it had during the depression, providing some administrative respite, but concomitant reductions in appropriations and staff left buildings, roads, and trails in disrepair by the war's end. Despite the nation's emergence as the world's economic power, the National Park Service once more suffered from postwar financial readjustments while the American people returned to the parks in unprecedented numbers. Thinking in terms of structural solutions, seasoned managers addressed enduring visitational problems by focusing limited dollars and manpower on maintenance while soliciting new construction funds that would not arrive until the middle 1950s.

With the spread of war throughout Europe after 1939, U.S. political leaders began to turn from domestic issues toward national defense and aid to European allies. Emergency Conservation Works projects lingered into 1942, but with substantial reductions in funds and the clear trend in world affairs, NPS administrators understood that their construction bonanza was nearing an end. Strategies shifted to finishing projects in progress and planning for the protection of assets, which numbered 164 national parks, monuments, and miscellaneous units enclosing 21,609,000 acres.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout World War II the National Park Service followed a consistent policy of assisting the war effort while preventing irreparable damage to parks' scenic attributes. Well before Secretary Ickes's call to "full mobilization of the Nation's natural resources," NPS Director Newton Drury in November 1940 had defined the agency's role. First, it would forego efforts to attract visitors and enhance the parks, eliminate building programs, and hunker down to bare-bones administration, interpretation, and essential maintenance of existing structures. Second, Drury set the

procedure by which the parks could be tapped, insisting that special-use applications strictly follow presidential and congressional directives and that applicants prove the necessity of using parks as opposed to other alternatives. Third, in order to protect its patriotic image as well as shelter resources, the NPS would offer non-destructive uses for wartime needs. To help ensure success, Drury reiterated old arguments for establishing the parks as national icons that would "stimulate love of country and national pride," and as places where military and civilians alike might retire to "restore shattered nerves."<sup>3</sup>

Administrators successfully defended the parks from despoliation while opening them up for wartime uses, but they suffered nonetheless from sharp declines in appropriations and staff. As the government shut down the U.S. Travel Bureau, restricted NPS advertisements, forbade nonessential travel, and imposed rationing on gasoline and rubber, and as men went off to war and wives took jobs to support families at home, visitation servicewide fell from a 1941 peak of 19,300,000 to a low of 7,460,000 in 1944,

rebounding only slightly to 8,550,000 in 1945.<sup>4</sup> Reduced appropriations actually preceded the decline in visitation as the nation prepared for war, plummeting from \$26,200,000 in 1939 to \$13,500,000 in 1940, then hitting bottom at \$4,500,000 in 1944.<sup>5</sup> More serious, however, was the loss of emergency dollars that had funded most NPS architects and engineers, many of its naturalists, and thousands of manual laborers. The latter had for nine years pursued tens of thousands of building, maintenance, and protection projects on which administrators had become dependent. Their departure proved all the more serious when combined with the loss of experienced personnel to military assignments, as permanent staff fell from 5,145 in 1941 to 1,573 in 1944.<sup>6</sup>

World War II's consequences at Grand Canyon in most ways followed those of the system in general, although few threats to natural resources arose. No particular demands were placed on ponderosa pine, pinyon, or juniper, the dominant tree species within the narrow strip of park lands south of the rim. More valuable fir and spruce dominated larger woodlands to the north, but the Arizona Strip remained distant from convenient transport, and its forest industry would not develop until the late 1940s. Pioneer families had long ago determined that few minerals of commercial value lay buried within or beside the canyon, and the Orphan Mine's rich uranium deposits that would later fuel the nation's atomic energy program had not yet been discovered. The war spawned only one mining venture within or adjacent to the park: the reopening of early twentieth-century mines in Carbonate Canyon by the Havasu Lead and Zinc Company in the fall and winter of 1943-44. The NPS rejected the company's request to build a tramway from Manakacha Point to facilitate extraction, which probably hastened the venture's demise. Havasupais continued to graze livestock in the vicinity of Great Thumb Mesa as they had since long before park creation, and ten or so permittees ran cattle and sheep on several thousand acres of the national monument as they had since 1932, but allotments did not increase.<sup>7</sup>

Military uses of Grand Canyon National Park were slight compared to some parks and more or less representative of the larger system. Superintendent Harold Bryant wrote in 1944 that men in uniform who arrived with their families, in transit to duty stations, on maneuvers, or to stay in temporary rest camps, represented about a third of park visitation, which declined from a peak of 436,500 in 1941 to a low of 64,500 in 1944, before rebounding to 170,000 in 1945. Forty-four special permits authorized overnight bivouacs of one to three days for more than 19,000 troops, who apparently spent more time sightseeing than field training.<sup>8</sup> Several army groups were allowed to use the recently abandoned village CCC complex as a recreational camp, and the Kingman Army Air Group settled in for the

duration in August 1944, renovating some of the buildings as barracks, officer quarters, mess hall, and post exchange. Until June 1946 this facility resembled a military post beside any resort village, troops rotating from active duty at Kingman to recreate a few weeks at a time. Men wore Class A uniforms when not on work detail, shopped at the PX to avoid taxing limited supplies at Babbitts Store, and were cautioned to carouse at camp rather than crowd the El Tovar bar. Otherwise, they were invited to mingle with residents, shop at curio stores, and take advantage of curtailed concessioner services. The men apparently did mingle, to

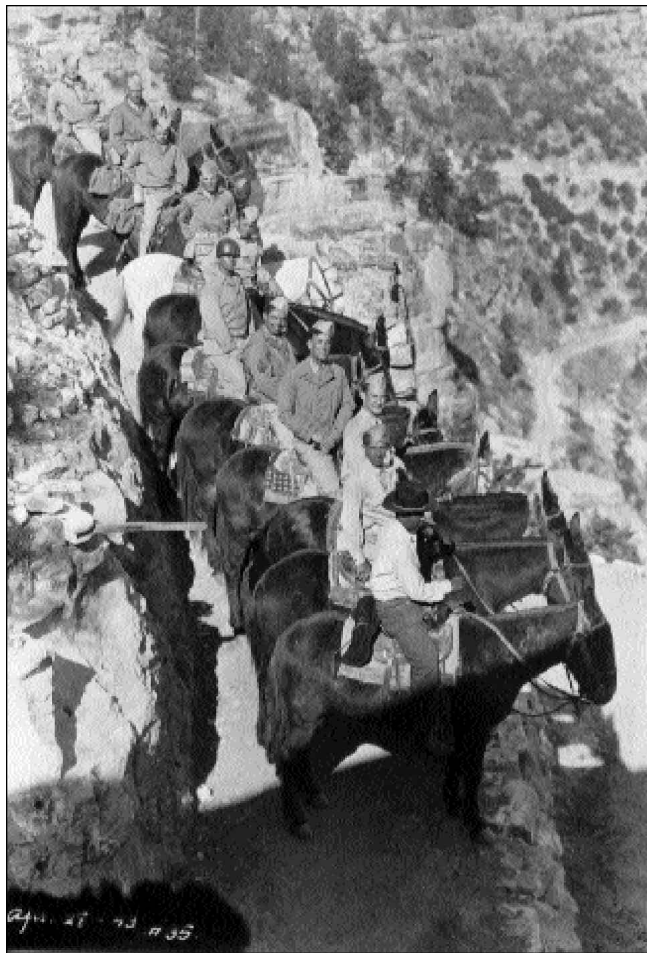


Figure 26. Members of the 51st Armored Infantry along the Bright Angel Trail in April 1943. During World War II nearly a third of park visitors were servicemen on leave, on maneuvers, or en route to duty stations. GCR 15214; photo by Emily Kolb

the extent that noncommissioned officers were cautioned to monitor their men's activities. "Guests" were not allowed in camp after midnight and never to the barracks, and military police were stationed at the El Tovar as well as the women's dormitory.<sup>9</sup>

National Park Service personnel, concessioner employees, and other village residents responded to the war much like civilians in towns across the nation. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, Bryant was named coordinator of the local

civil defense organization. The village was zoned for fire and blackout contingencies, and residents served as air raid wardens, participated in elementary military drill and fire-fighting classes, guarded strategic points against sabotage, and manned lookout towers to spot forest fires as well as enemy aircraft. They continued to participate in varied social and business clubs, but spent considerable free time organizing bond drives, collecting scrap paper, rubber, and metals, and tending victory gardens that numbered more than sixty by war's end.<sup>10</sup> Park Naturalist Louis Schellbach served on the state's Committee on the Conservation of Cultural Resources, a presidential body established nationwide to protect assets like the park's study collections and libraries from enemy mischief. The Japanese never got around to invading the continental United States nor did sabotage touch the park, but special training demanded of residents, rangers, and military alike helped limit the spread of wildfires that were numerous during regional drought years of 1942-48.<sup>11</sup>

With dramatic reductions in staff and appropriations, special wartime duties made it all the more difficult to address routine operations and maintenance. Bryant, who had served briefly as acting superintendent in 1940, returned from Kings Canyon National Park in July 1941 to replace Frank Kittredge, while longtime assistant superintendent Jimmy Lloyd moved on to Lassen Volcanic National Park and was replaced by John M. Davis. These men, new to their jobs though veteran NPS managers, found it difficult to pursue a consistent management plan as employees left with little notice and could not be replaced because of diminishing funds. By summer 1944, seventeen regular employees—nearly half the park staff—had left for war-related work, and the park made do with a ceiling of thirty-one employees throughout Fiscal Year 1945. Special appropriations for fire fighting, utilities construction, and road building dried up entirely, and base funding dropped to mid-1920s levels, averaging slightly more than \$100,000 per year.<sup>12</sup>

With the men and money at hand, war-related responsibilities, and considerable time expended on fire suppression, management was forced to scale back construction, maintenance, and services to bare necessities. New construction nearly ended with the departure of the CCC, but minor projects continued such as crafting rustic road signs and log benches along rim drives and footpaths. Maintenance was hampered by shortages in materials diverted to the war, but most resources still went toward essential upkeep of rim roads, corridor trails, and administrative buildings.<sup>13</sup> A few rangers patrolled the backcountry on multi-purpose field trips, searching for fire, fixing trails, sighting wildlife, trapping deer for relocation, shooting feral burros, and planting trout, while north and east entrance

stations went unstaffed in all but summer months. Visitor education and interpretation was left to Grand Canyon Natural History Association and Louis Schellbach, who conducted all lectures, campfire talks, and nature hikes by himself. Bryant and Davis staffed the Yavapai Observation Station to keep it open throughout the war.<sup>14</sup>

Most visitor services remained the province of concessioners and their railroad backers, who were harder pressed by the war than they had been in the darkest years of the depression. Still they managed to maintain utilities, improve their own formidable infrastructure, and serve reduced tourist demands. In late 1941 and early 1942 the Santa Fe Railroad built six two-room cabins, a duplex, a community wash house, and twelve three-room employee residences along Avenue B (Boulder street) to replace shacks and boxcars that had survived prior renovation programs. In 1943 and 1944 the Union Pacific Railroad rebuilt the power line from Roaring Springs to Bright Angel Point and augmented employee housing while persisting with a program to remodel visitor cabins and residences through 1945.

In the face of declining business, the principal concessioners, like their federal partners, spent almost nothing to expand park infrastructure and, by War Department order, cut services far deeper than they had during 1930-33. Before the end of Fiscal Year 1942, the Fred Harvey Company closed Lookout Studio and eliminated bus tours. It also closed Bright Angel Lodge, although its cabins could still be rented from the lobby of the El Tovar Hotel. Similarly, on the North Rim the Utah Parks Company closed Grand Canyon Lodge but rented its cabins from the Grand Canyon Inn, which remained open with sharply reduced services. By the end of Fiscal Year 1943, rationing and travel restrictions had ended passenger train service, tours along both rims, NavaHopi Tours' bus service from Flagstaff, and commercial stages to Bright Angel Point. The Watchtower, Hermits Rest, and Hopi House also closed for the duration, as did the Motor Lodge and associated cafeteria, Dan Hogan's facilities, and most of Jack Harbin's business at Rowe Well. Visitors could still take a mule ride down to Phantom Ranch (which remained open), participate in the park's limited interpretive services, and shop at Babbitt's Store, Kolb Studio, and Verkamps Curios. The Kaibab Lodge at VT Park also managed to remain in business.<sup>15</sup>

### POST-WAR BOOM

NPS administrators had accurately predicted World War II's effects on national park operations and, before the war was over, forecast a postwar surge in visitation that would inundate existing facilities. Congress, however, focused on higher national priorities during the late 1940s and early 1950s, including the war debt, aid to debilitated allies, an

escalating cold war, and reconversion of industry to peacetime production. Slighted by postwar appropriations, the NPS did what it could given its policies of enhancing the park experience to customer tastes and accommodating all who chose to visit. It covered old political ground by pleading as strenuously as ever the economic importance of tourism and the park system's critical role in attracting western visitation. Pragmatically, it tried to promote recreational use during winter months in order to arrest summer peaks, utilized war-surplus equipment to maintain roads and trails, and allocated scarce resources to structural maintenance. Efforts to keep up proved futile, however, as units were added to the system, their need of initial development bled allocations, and visitation soared from 16 million during Fiscal Year 1946 to more than 50 million by 1955.<sup>16</sup>

Historians identify the quarter-century beginning in 1945 as a period when "the United States experienced a prosperity and world economic hegemony unparalleled in history."<sup>17</sup> By-products of economic strength included the flow of federal dollars to the West that had begun with the depression and world war, accompanied by southwestern population growth, a second program of interstate highways, and a plethora of power and water projects, all bringing significant pressures to bear on the western parks. While extractive industries prospered during the postwar boom then fell on more volatile times after 1970, service industries, including regional tourism, continued their steady climb toward economic dominance. During 1945-60 Arizona's population grew from 500,000 to 1.3 million, while southern California residents, who had since the 1910s visited Grand Canyon more frequently than any other state's residents, more than doubled. By 1950, two-thirds of all Americans took annual vacations and four of every five set out in private automobiles to see (as they had long been urged) America first. As Stephen Mather had argued, tourism did bring significant cash (if few high-paying jobs) to the Southwest. In California alone in 1949 three million tourists spent \$457 million, and tourism-related services ranked number two among southern California industries. The rise of another popular tourist destination, Las Vegas, Nevada, added to east-west travel along U.S. 66.<sup>18</sup>

National and southwestern prosperity and demographic trends were reflected in visitation to Grand Canyon during 1945-56. Superintendent Bryant, one who foresaw the human avalanche and tried to plan for it, wrote in 1946 that

until VJ Day, travel was relatively light, although showing a slight increase over 1945 fiscal year. However, with the end of the war, it appeared that everyone who had had a trip planned and interrupted by the war immediately resumed his plans in many instances starting the same day. He was joined by thousands of others who were simply enjoying the relief from war tensions...<sup>19</sup>

Only 74,000 people entered the park during the closing twelve months of the war. With national travel restrictions lifted in August 1945, 334,000 arrived in the ensuing twelve months. In 1947 annual visitation for the first time topped one-half mil-



lion, then reached 621,000 in 1948 before assuming a gentler curve, surpassing one million for the first time in 1956.<sup>20</sup> Bryant cited the one-million automobile permit sold on 11 April 1947, and laconically added that "another twenty-one years will not be required to sell the next one million." He reported in 1946 that seasonal travel patterns persisted from prewar years. June through August were the most popular months, and Easter, Memorial Day, and Independence Day remained peak twenty-four-hour periods, with a record 98,545 arriving in June 1947—4,262 on 19 June alone. Other trends included a proportionately greater number of arrivals through the north and east entrance stations and a rise in rail travel for a few years followed by a steady decline after 1949, despite the Santa Fe Railroad's launching of a new transcontinental train named The Grand Canyon in June 1947.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 27. Left to right: Jim Crook, Havasupai council member and Episcopal minister; Harold C. Bryant; Tom Dodge, superintendent, Truxton Indian Agency; Lemuel Paya, tribal council chairman; Reed Watahomigie, interpreter; Dudley Manakaha, first chief of the Havasupai Tribe and council member; William H. Zeh, regional director of Indian services; Big Jim Gvetna, Havasupai chief and council member; Lon Garrison; and Foster Marshall, tribal council member and mail carrier. Grand Canyon Village, September 1947. GEA 982.

Base appropriations and permanent staffing in 1946 approximated those of 1941 in terms of dollars and head-count but did not reflect the loss of prewar emergency laborers and special appropriations, or postwar inflation for equipment, materials, supplies, and labor. Musing over postwar reductions in 1953, NPS director Conrad Wirth lamented that the National Park Service operated with 25 percent less manpower than it had in 1941, despite a 10 percent increase in system units and more than twice the number of visitors, and that its “patch-on-patch” program of facility maintenance had lost considerable ground.<sup>22</sup> Again, canyon administrators faced similar dilemmas.

Appropriations in 1945 totaled \$106,000, and in 1946 were, in Bryant’s words, “hardly sufficient to continue to operate on a wartime basis,” making it difficult to rehire men returning from the war. Bryant summarized the financial situation in another way when he wrote that in 1935, regular appropriations had equaled 47 cents per visitor; in 1940, 33 cents; and by 1948, the administrative low point following the war, only 29 cents.<sup>23</sup>

Funds for Fiscal Year 1947 reached \$282,000, but the forty-hour work week imposed on federal agencies combined with personnel ceilings severely limited manpower for protection, patrol, and public contact. In 1948 the ranger force resembled that of the mid-1920s with only a chief ranger, two assistant chiefs, and eight permanent rangers.<sup>24</sup> Even working six and seven days per week, these men could do little more than operate entrance and interpretive stations, sometimes only eight hours per day, yet remained responsible for forest insect and disease control programs, trapping and removing surplus deer, fire suppression, and a host of other duties. Men and money increased marginally during the early 1950s, but were more than matched by visitors who introduced new problems and exacerbated old ones. Human-caused fires had increased, search-and-rescue operations became more frequent, traffic accidents consumed considerably more time, and village congestion—worsened by “deer jams” and inadequate parking—often demanded a full-time ranger just to prod traffic. Although the park hired more Havasupais as short-term, low-wage, manual laborers than they had in the past, administration remained, as Bryant had implied in 1946, a ceaseless effort to keep many steps behind escalating demands of soaring visitation.<sup>25</sup>

Canyon administrators also noticed disheartening postwar sociological changes that consumed ranger time and increased costs. Bryant and Chief Watahomigie wondered at the unruly nature of young Havasupais returning from

the war and the need to police their activities and eject several from the park. Far more troublesome were proliferating acts of vandalism and littering on the part of tourists. Beginning in 1946, Bryant compiled a litany of abused signs, interpretive displays, trees, and shrubbery; graffiti; and damaged or stolen binoculars and fossil specimens at Yavapai Observation Station. He then lamented his staff’s inability to prevent such “vicious acts of destruction.” The renewed automotive invasion along with visitor trends to economize by camping and eating packaged goods from their vehicles produced a “mess of papers, picnic lunch remains, and other trash...wantonly strewn across the landscape.” Shortages of picnic areas, hotel rooms, cabins, and camping spaces caused widespread at-large camping, resulting in the “carving of names on trees and buildings, picking of flowers and many other misdemeanors” throughout the park. The park began to address littering

in 1949, spending \$8,000 per year over the next few years to clean it up, strategically locating trash cans “adorned with little jingles” to invite their use, and distributing trash bags and topical leaflets at entrance stations, but Bryant despaired of reversing the trend.<sup>26</sup>

Probably the most significant and costly management trend following the war and continuing today was a new attention paid to visitor and employee safety, an inner-park manifestation of popular beliefs emerging from the New Deal that the federal government owed its citizens cradle-to-grave security, an idea driven home by increased litigation. In 1946 NPS director Conrad Wirth wrote that although the use of wilderness parks carried inherent hazards to life and limb, the NPS

“recognizes that the protection of visitors is a serious and sobering responsibility, and the effort to assure adequate protection is constant.” This opinion has been echoed by Wirth’s successors ever since, evidenced by proliferating warning and informational signs as well as spiraling safety-related duties and associated expense.<sup>27</sup> Administrators systemwide had always been concerned for public health in terms of safe water supplies, sewage systems, and concessioner food-handling, but with multiplying tort claims they were compelled to pay closer attention to visitor and occupational safety. At Grand Canyon this led to corresponding increases in safety regulations, hundreds of ugly signs mar- rying the landscape, formal search-and-rescue operations with more elaborate equipment, frequent safety seminars, safety engineers, committees, endless meetings, better emergency facilities, and upgraded utility and fire suppression systems within old and new buildings. Safety concerns also led to the first trailhead registers and permit require-



Figure 28. Assistant Superintendent James V. “Jimmy” Lloyd. GRCA 16377.

ments for river trips on the Colorado River. By 1947 increased duties and paperwork combined with added safety requirements and policing consumed fifteen man-days per week, roughly 30 percent of the ranger staff.<sup>28</sup>

Development plans drawn during the war years reiterated earlier decisions not to expand the village westward beyond the base of Hopi Hill, to devote the rim to public use, and to restrict employee housing to the residential area south of the railroad tracks.<sup>29</sup> Given new operating costs and scanty appropriations, such plans were hardly necessary as almost no new development could occur during the immediate postwar era. Still, recognizing that inadequate housing was “more harmful to morale than any other difficulties” and that employees had changed from prewar bachelors to married men with families, work focused on improved housing through small painting, roofing, wiring, flooring, and insulation projects. At the village in 1947-48, workmen remodeled three CCC barracks into eight apartments for seasonal personnel and two others into permanent residences. At the North Rim, five small CCC buildings were relocated to the administrative area at Bright Angel Point and remodeled for the same purposes. Two three-bedroom residences were completed at Grand Canyon Village in late 1949, two two-bedroom homes in 1950, and another two in 1951 before the paltry construction program turned to miscellaneous structures. These included a “modern rest room facility” at Hermits Rest constructed during 1951-53; a recreational hall at Supai Camp and new south entrance station in 1952; and reconstruction of the Hopi fire tower, a three-room addition to the Grand Canyon School, and a duplex teachers’ residence in 1953.<sup>30</sup>

### POST-WAR CONCESSIONS

Inadequate resources to serve employees and visitors to NPS standards was by no means new to park managers. They had long been subject to congressional dictates, but managers had always been able to count on concessioners to invest during periods of visitor expansion. Despite such expansion in the postwar era, however, operators were dissuaded from major investments. Their reluctance began during the war with reduced revenues and profits and the government’s unwillingness to renegotiate or execute new contracts. Uncertainty was compounded early in 1946 when congressional criticism of monopolies, prices, and profits again delayed new contracts while a Concessions Advisory Group studied the charges. In February 1948 this panel agreed with NPS officials who argued that concessioners had played essential roles through the years, risking capital the federal government refused to invest on seasonal operations with an average return of only 3 to 7 percent. The findings, and Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug’s policies following the report, appeased Congress but failed to elicit

venture capital. Therefore, Krug’s successor, Oscar L. Chapman, loosened the investment logjam in October 1950 by setting policy that granted preferential treatment to existing concessioners, allowed contracts to be renegotiated before their expiration, further protected concessioner assets, added flexibility to the manner of calculating franchise fees, and provided other inducements to expand facilities. Also, by 1952 standard contracts began to spell out types of improvements to be made along with their dollar values and timetables and carried up to thirty-year terms for multi-million dollar expenditures. Along with a reinforced NPS Concessions Division to monitor compliance, Chapman’s policies began to have the desired effect.<sup>31</sup>

Canyon administrators’ postwar relationships with their investment partners corresponded to national policies. At the North Rim, the Utah Parks Company had received permission to curtail services during the war and for a “reasonable period” thereafter. After the war, the company continued to experience losses owed to the brief summer travel season, maintenance of the costly Grand Canyon Lodge and landslide-prone Roaring Springs water system, and NPS-imposed rates that were pegged to prices in Fredonia and Kanab eighty miles to the north.<sup>32</sup> During the war the NPS and the concessioner had decided to tie all of the Utah Parks Company’s regional operations into one contract to help offset these losses. With expiration of the original North Rim agreement on 31 December 1946 existing contracts for individual parks were renewed annually until 1948 when a new twenty-year pact was signed including Bryce, Zion, Cedar Breaks, and Bright Angel Point.<sup>33</sup> In the ten years following, the National Park Service allowed the company to write off more of its park-related expenses, but the short travel season, high costs, fixed rates, and economy-minded tourists would guarantee losses for another quarter century.<sup>34</sup>

Despite a new contract and return to the prewar trend of escalating visitation, the Union Pacific Railroad held back on major tourism-related investments. This was due partially to policy uncertainties, but also to limited space at Bright Angel Point and administrators’ unwillingness to develop the Walhalla Plateau or westward along the rim. Seasonal operations returned to normal with the reopening of Grand Canyon Lodge in June 1945, but even with all cabins operating, some visitors by 1947 had to return to Jacob Lake to find overnight accommodations during peak periods.<sup>35</sup> Rather than build new facilities, company managers focused on maintenance and renovations to existing cabins and utilities. In 1947 they modernized the lodge and cafeteria to the high end of county health standards and in 1949 converted the incinerator to burn fuel oil, upgraded sewer lines, added hot water heaters, showers, and toilets to thirty lodge cabins, rebuilt 1,000 feet of penstock to the

hydroelectric plant, and erected a new machine shop and powerhouse. In 1950 and 1951 contractors refurbished twenty-six standard two-room lodge cabins, eighteen one-room cabins at the Grand Canyon Inn, and the men's and women's dormitories with showers, toilets, and individual water heaters. In 1952 the company built a 568,000-gallon water tank and installed hot water heaters in each of its luxury cabins. The Union Pacific invested in these types of improvements each year during 1947-55, but chose to tolerate peak overflows rather than build rooms that might be rented only a few weeks per year.<sup>36</sup>

Visitation at the South Rim continued to outdistance the North Rim by ten-

to-one, yet contract renewals lagged even longer and services fell further behind demand. The Verkamps's 1936 contract technically ended in April 1944 with the death of canyon pioneer John Verkamp. Administrators who coveted the store's prime location preferred that the business be sold to another operator and the "unsightly" studio removed. James E. Babbitt, however, representing the interests of John's wife, Catherine, and her children, Margaret, Mary, Catherine, and John, Jr.,

persuaded them to transfer the pact to surviving family members until its expiration on 31 December 1945.<sup>37</sup> Consistent with postwar policy, Superintendent Bryant and Regional Director Tillotson allowed year-to-year extensions beyond 1945. Meanwhile, they negotiated with the family to build a new studio immediately east of the original, erect new employee housing, and increase franchise fees or reduce product costs to produce a net return of 6 to 8 percent rather than the 30 to 45 percent the store had earned since the 1920s. In 1948 the NPS advertised for a new contract but received only one bidder who had no greater financial resources than the Verkamps. The family therefore retained the concession through preferential right until securing a ten-year contract in 1954.<sup>38</sup>

The Verkamps had always been in the enviable position of selling luxury items at a high markup, which, in combi-

nation with low overhead and family labor, explained the store's profitability. The Babbitts's general merchandise business, on the other hand, consisted of food and other consumable items with prices tied to those in the nearest communities more than fifty miles distant and with competition to some extent posed by the Fred Harvey Company.<sup>39</sup> Members of the Babbitt family, busy elsewhere with regional ranches and trading posts, also incurred greater overhead in terms of hired-labor and employee housing and had since 1921 invested far more in capital improvements.<sup>40</sup> Still, the adeptly managed store weathered the war with marginal profits and benefited greatly from the tourist

boom and return to economy travel after 1947, posting gross revenues of \$121,800 in 1945 that grew to \$380,400 by 1949. Its well-connected and business-savvy owners had managed to secure a ten-year contract in 1941 that required an annual grounds fee of \$1,500 plus 25 percent of profits beyond an initial 6 percent of the value of its capital investments, terms which afforded comfortable returns.<sup>41</sup>

With rising revenues and profitability following the war, Babbitt Brothers expressed a willingness to invest

more, an offer that pleased administrators and became the prime ingredient in negotiating a new agreement. The company asked for a twenty-year contract to allow for a "stable business" and adequate time to amortize investments, continuation of the \$1,500 grounds fee, and a formula that would allow the company to keep all profits on the first \$50,000 in sales with the

NPS receiving 1 percent of gross or 50 percent of profit beyond \$50,000.<sup>42</sup> After lengthy bargaining, the company gained much of what it had sought with a new fifteen-year contract in April 1952 that required payment of a \$1,200 grounds fee and .5 percent of gross to \$500,000, 1 percent for the next \$200,000, and 2 percent above \$700,000. Like all contracts consummated since the early 1950s, it called for periodic fee renegotiation, but the company would do very well on these terms. An accompanying agreement required



Figures 29-30. Fred Gurly, president of the Santa Fe Railroad (left) and Byron Harvey, Jr., president of the Fred Harvey Company (right) below Mooney Falls in Havasu Canyon, 1950. GRCA 2002, GRCA 2005.

the company to invest \$50,000 in improvements over the ensuing few years.<sup>43</sup>

Emery Kolb, like the Verkamps, hung on to his meager merchandise, lecture, and photographic concession beside the rim because administrators could not conjure a way to be rid of him without risking the ire of highly influential friends—in Kolb's case, Arizona Senators Carl Hayden and Barry Goldwater. In truth, Superintendent Bryant and successors Pat Patraw and John S. McLaughlin valued Kolb as a canyon pioneer but, like Miner Tillotson in the 1930s, did not believe the concession necessary, thought his lectures and films anachronistic by the 1950s, and frankly did not want the curmudgeon's uncensored version of canyon management expressed directly to visitors. They considered a number of options, including purchase of his possessory interest or a short-term pact with an option to buy at its expiration—in either case, fully intending to raze the studio and adjacent garage. They also considered demanding that he update his lecture, films, and photographs, or simply ending the concession upon his retirement or death, one or the other of which they mistakenly thought imminent. They settled on five-year contracts executed in 1952 and 1956 that required Kolb to pay a \$250 grounds fee plus 4 percent of gross receipts, 3 percent in the 1956 accord, with agreement among regional administrators that they would veto investments that increased his possessory interest.<sup>44</sup>

Of course, administrators looked to the Santa Fe Railroad to fulfill nearly all demands of burgeoning visitation, and the railroad proved even more reluctant than the Union Pacific to invest. By early 1946 the Fred Harvey Company reopened all South Rim facilities and transportation services that had been closed during the war and the Santa Fe Railroad resumed rail service to the rim.<sup>45</sup> In the second half of their twenty-year contract with no prospect for renegotiations, however, Santa Fe Railroad officials balked at building anew and stated their intention to confine new construction to their twenty-acre depot site. With visitor trends continuing to emphasize economy, the Santa Fe Railroad concentrated on additional capacity at the Motor Lodge. They installed twenty-four prefabricated cabins beside the wye in 1946, another twelve by the following spring, and moved twenty-two cabins from Bright Angel Lodge in 1948 while modernizing 120 older units with baths and/or hot and cold running water.<sup>46</sup> Even so, Fred Harvey Company managers, with NPS approval, found it necessary to impose a seven-day stay limit at the El Tovar and Bright Angel Lodge during summer months in 1945 and a three-day limit in 1946 which continued for several years thereafter. By 1949, village "pillow count" (the number of people who could be accommodated indoors) totaled only 1,100 in a year when 103,000 visitors arrived in

June, 119,000 in July, and 122,700 in August. Administrators estimated that as many as 15 to 30 percent of those seeking accommodations had to be turned away. Long lines at Bright Angel Lodge, El Tovar dining room, and the Motor Lodge cafeteria also made it clear that eating establishments designed in an era of leisurely sit-down meals could not keep pace with more—and more hurried—customers.<sup>47</sup>

Although the railroad did invest considerable sums in renovations to existing structures, facility shortages by 1950 prompted Region Three Director Miner Tillotson to urgently suggest a new contract in return for a definitive building program.<sup>48</sup> Echoing the posture of the Union Pacific president a few years earlier, Santa Fe Railroad president F.G. Gurley wrote Congress in late 1949 that

in the light of our interpretation of the views of the Department of the Interior, including public statements of belief in ownership by the Federal Government of Park facilities, Santa Fe looks upon any further investment at Grand Canyon with grave misgivings.<sup>49</sup>

Bryant heartily agreed with Tillotson, setting priority needs at 200 additional rooms, more dining seats, and more housing, which, despite an increasing number of employees since 1946, had consisted solely of trailers moved into "Tent City."<sup>50</sup> The Santa Fe Railroad instead viewed federal ownership and contract uncertainties, as well as its decline in passenger service and financial difficulties on a national scale, as signs that it should shed its national park investments. The railroad might have sold or ceded all of its non-rail related properties to the Fred Harvey Company, with whom it had always been generous, had not Congress and the Department of the Interior in the late 1930s begun to reconsider ownership of in-park concessions and experiment with government-owned structures operated by private concerns. Given the government's still-uncertain policy in this regard, managers and attorneys in the early 1950s began to plan instead to transfer some properties to the concessioner and others to the National Park Service, deliberations that further postponed new construction.<sup>51</sup>

The railroad's generosity posed one of the greater difficulties. Over the years it had provided many services to the Fred Harvey Company free of charge while deducting the expense in its own financial statements. On the other hand, the concessioner had determined its return on investment, integral to its payment of franchise fees, based in part on these expenses it had not paid. In order to unravel the overlap as well as determine accurate costs of providing utilities, the Sessions Engineering Company was called in to study the issue in 1954.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, the Santa Fe Railroad executed an "instrument of donation" on 9 March 1954, transferring all interests in its water, power, road, and trail sys-



tems, valued at \$1.1 million, to the federal government, along with easements for West Rim Drive, trails, and foot-paths through its twenty-acre depot site.<sup>53</sup> Recognizing that the National Park Service was in no position to operate the utilities, the railroad agreed to run them temporarily under permit.<sup>54</sup>

Administrators who had no desire to operate the park's power systems contracted with Arizona Public Service (APS) in June 1954 to provide electric service to Grand Canyon Village.<sup>55</sup> They turned over the recently acquired power grid and equipment to APS, but bringing electricity to the canyon required the company to spend another \$700,000 to string a 69,000-volt, three-wire, three-phase transmission line from Williams to a new substation at the village, with lines extending from the substation to the emerging town of Tusayan. Superintendent Pat Patraw threw the ceremonial switch in January 1955, celebrating the first commercial



however, with the prospect of acquiring the railroad properties, the concessioner became as eager as the National Park Service to restart talks. In determining franchise fees, adminis-

Figure 31.A A new generation of Fred Harvey buses line up at the new canyon pullout at Mather Point in autumn 1954. GRCA 2726; photo by Steve Leding

utility other than telephone to reach the park, capable of meeting needs of the village's 800 year-round residents as well as peak visitor demands. Two of the power plant's three generators were decommissioned with APS's arrival, but the plant itself and one generator were saved as an auxiliary source of power and for steam generation essential for building heat and laundry services.<sup>56</sup> Under cooperative agreements thereafter, the Fred Harvey Company generated the steam, APS operated the auxiliary generator, and the NPS took over the water system's control equipment. As a part of the division of responsibilities, administrators agreed to remove the 167-foot, reinforced-concrete smokestack, and Fred Harvey paid for induced-draft fans to replace the outdated eyesore.<sup>57</sup>

Coincident with the transfer of utilities, the Santa Fe Railroad sold its tourist facilities to the Fred Harvey Company later in 1954 for \$1.5 million.<sup>58</sup> Holdings ranged from Hermits Rest on the west to Desert View on the East, at Pipe Creek, Yaki Point, and Phantom Ranch. Important assets included Hermits Rest; Lookout Studio, El Tovar Hotel, Hopi House, Bright Angel Lodge, and Motor Lodge, as well as the women's, men's, Indian, and Mexican dormitories, all located in the village along the rim; an employees' campground, service station, garage, barns, corrals, laundry, and assorted parking areas, also within the village; the Watchtower at Desert View; and facilities at Phantom Ranch. These buildings sat on less

than one hundred acres; some of it was federal land used under permit extending for the life of each concession contract, the rest was railroad grant lands. Since it intended to continue passenger and freight service, the Santa Fe Railroad retained its 200-foot right-of-way and depot site, as well as the depot, trackage, employee housing on Avenues A, B, and C, and all rail-related structures.<sup>59</sup>

Considering the railroad's reluctance to invest and the Fred Harvey Company's inability to bargain without its financial partner, it is understandable that negotiations for a new contract went nowhere during 1950-53.<sup>60</sup> By late 1953,

trators considered the Fred Harvey Company's average annual net profits of only \$100,000 per year in the early 1950s, its need to retire the purchase debt to the Santa Fe Railroad and to borrow more to build anything new, and operation without the railroad's financial safety net, which they realized would be "fraught with great difficulties" for a few years.<sup>61</sup> Terms therefore appear generous to today's eyes, with fees reduced from 3 percent of gross over \$600,000 (per the 1933 contract) to a flat grounds fee of \$5,000 plus .75 percent of gross. The greatest stumbling block to the new twenty-year contract, which became effective 1 August 1954, was the new NPS policy allowing either party to renegotiate fees every five years for the life of a long-term agreement. The NPS insisted on the clause but compromised with a provision that total increases could not exceed 50 percent of the initial fee for the life of the contract.<sup>62</sup> With gross receipts averaging \$3.5 million over the following five years, the new pact would yield net profits of \$250,000 per annum yet allow the National Park Service's highly valued concession partner to get on its own feet and undertake projects to keep in step with administrative developments on the horizon.<sup>63</sup>

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Intellectually, NPS managers understood as early as 1945 that they would no longer need to attract visitors to the parks. Newton Drury wrote immediately before war's end that

the policy of refraining from all activities which would tend to promote travel [begun with wartime travel restrictions] was continued. No effort will be devoted to that end in the near future. It need not be. After the war many areas in the System will have many more visitors than can be accommodated satisfactorily with existing facilities. Efforts need to be directed rather toward effecting a more even distribution of travel....<sup>64</sup>

In practice, however, the National Park Service had a difficult time escaping its promotional roots. Most direct advertising did shift to the state, county, and private sectors, but the NPS continued to assist with publicity that was limited



Figure 32. Assistant Superintendent Lon Garrison (1903-1984), at far right, with Fred Harvey manager W. D. Rouzer (far left, standing) and a group of Williams business people at a South Rim "Show-Me" day GRCA 1978.

only by reduced appropriations. One of Drury's principal post-war regrets, in fact, centered on deep cuts in federal printing budgets, limiting response to inquiries for educational materials, brochures, and other promotional literature.

In his annual reports to the secretary of the interior, he rarely failed to lament insufficient funds to print and distribute informational data to editors, writers, publishers, automobile clubs, travel organizations, newspapers, public libraries, and schools.<sup>65</sup> He also voiced a keen interest in attracting winter visitation to redistribute the load, but recognized the challenge posed by few suitable cold-weather accommodations and the danger to resources unless "sound winter-use policies" could be developed. He hoped to promote noncommercial skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and sledding that would inflict "no undue disfiguration of important landscapes." The reluctance of Congress and concessioners to invest in seasonal facilities that promised only limited use, combined with the public's unwillingness to use them to any great degree, would impede this postwar initiative.<sup>66</sup>

Canyon administrators also felt the pinch of reduced promotional literature, and although the Fred Harvey Company advertised for winter visitation, neither the company nor park staff encouraged backcountry winter use. Rather, they tried to lure more tourists to developed facilities that languished each year from October through April.<sup>67</sup> Park managers began to rely more on Arizona's private tourism sector, which was growing at a healthy pace, largely owed to the canyon's magnetism, while they placed greater emphasis on regional public relations. Superintendent Bryant and Park Naturalist Schellbach both accepted invitations to speak on national radio, and some of the 3,000 individuals who attended the 1949 Easter sunrise

service protested its broadcast as a blatant commercial. Bryant and Assistant Superintendent Lon Garrison frequented chamber of commerce and other business meetings throughout the state and encouraged organization of a South Rim Rotary Club in March 1946 as well as a canyon chapter of the Business and

Professional Women's Club in May 1952. Bryant boasted of 263 packaged rail tours in 1952, enjoyed the General Petroleum Corporation's Mobilgas-Grand Canyon Economy Run that reached the South Rim each year in the early 1950s, and took great pride in helping to organize the park's "Show-Me" days, wherein regional tourism leaders gathered at the village to inspect its accommodations.<sup>68</sup>

Given concessioners' unwillingness to develop additional accommodations and inadequate NPS budgets, even indirect promotion suggested institutional schizophrenia. This diagnosis is substantiated by administrators' inability to keep up with trail and road systems, campgrounds, or interpretive services. In 1947 the park trail crew began to station men responsible for certain sections of the most heavily used corridor paths at strategic points, while more remote trails, including the once-popular Hermit Trail, received no attention at all.<sup>69</sup> In the same year Bryant reported that the corridor had become so congested with mule trips and an increased number of inner-canyon day hikers that mule parties returning from Phantom Ranch had to be rerouted to the South Kaibab Trail to avoid hikers along the Bright Angel Trail.<sup>70</sup>

Similar congestion and deterioration was noted for park

roads. Without funds for improvements, the park road crew addressed only the worst problems with war-surplus equipment, stabilizing shoulders, removing vegetation to ease raveling of edges, and resurfacing short segments at a time. Realignment of the South Entrance Road was the only major project undertaken during 1945-55. It had been planned in 1946 so that visitors would, in Bryant's words, "bypass the present confusion of roads in the village and reach the rim of the Canyon more easily," but work did not begin until 1952 when highway funds began to reappear. In that year the Bureau of Public Roads rejected the only bid submitted as far costlier than engineers' estimates—another manifestation of postwar inflation. In the following year, the Fisher Contracting Company submitted a high but acceptable bid and began work on the first three miles of roadway from the boundary toward Mather Point. The Givens Construction Company of Phoenix completed the 7.42-mile entrance highway in November 1954, affording visitors, as Bryant had hoped, an option to reach the rim, view the canyon along East Rim Drive, and exit the park at Desert View.<sup>71</sup>

The new entrance road did give day-use visitors an option to peer over the rim while avoiding the village, but it did not cause a discernible decrease in the number of motorists seeking overnight accommodations. Acute shortages of hotel rooms and cabins as well as trends toward economy vacations brought on by inflationary travel costs—all in the summer season—taxed limited camping facilities at both rims. Increased numbers of travel trailers, which equaled the number of tents by the mid-1950s, incited demands for utility hookups and added to the crowding. The practice of housing NPS and concessioner employees within and beside the campground only compounded the problem.<sup>72</sup> In spite of crushing demand, administrators abandoned the prewar policy of opening undeveloped campgrounds at less congested areas, reflecting increased concerns for littering, vandalism, fire, and visitor safety. Instead, they crammed tents and trailers alike into the single developed campground beside each rim's automotive lodge, a policy that created an inner-village slum at the South Rim. The park did nothing to improve the main campground other than rebuild tables and, in 1951, renovate the campfire circle with new lighting and benches. Meanwhile, some 56,800 campers filled the single village facility in summer 1951, 65,500 in 1952, and by 1953 campgrounds on both rims were "filled to overflowing." They also suffered from antiquated sanitary facilities that elicited a growing number of complaints.<sup>73</sup>

Sheer numbers also strained the park's interpretive programs. With the arrival of Assistant Park Naturalist Paul Schultz in April and seasonals' return in June 1946, naturalists reopened existing facilities and expanded programs to

the prewar scope, although for obvious reasons they never resumed automotive caravans. Yavapai Observation Station remained open every day as it had during the war, and the Wayside Museum of Archaeology (known today as Tusayan Museum) reopened five days per week in July 1947, both sites offering twice-daily lectures. Seasonal staff also resumed campfire lectures at both rims in summer 1946 and evening talks at the Bright Angel and Grand Canyon Lodges in the following year, while Schellbach renewed his popular "Naturalist's Workshop" program.<sup>74</sup> The "horde" of visitors, as Bryant had taken to calling them, immediately outpaced these efforts. In June 1949 summer contacts topped 50,000 per month, with 2,000 attending ranger-led nature hikes, 20,500 appearing for varied lectures, and



Figure 33. The Naturalist's Workshop (formerly the Grand Canyon School, 1930s) in January 1957, one of three early South Rim interpretive facilities (the others being Yavapai Observation Station and Tusayan Wayside Museum). GRCA 3194.

another 26,600 visiting Yavapai Observation Station.

The pressure proved so great that administrators began to experiment with innovative techniques like trailside exhibits installed along village paths, inner-canyon trails, and at Phantom Ranch, and motion pictures incorporated into campfire lectures. They also offered special talks to tour groups and increased scheduled lectures at Yavapai Observation Station to four per day during the summer. This facility, the only one in the park offering Grand Canyon's "full story," had become so crowded by 1950 that motorists parked in the woods along the road a quarter mile away to attend programs. Visitors at scheduled talks could not even get into the building, while an estimated one-third to one-half of those inside could not see or hear the naturalist. Conditions improved somewhat in 1953 when workers doubled lecture space by removing the interior partition and, while they were at it, added new exhibits and enclosed the front porch with glass to

allow viewing during inclement weather. Plans were made that same year to replace the aging building with a contact station at the same or another location but were set aside a few years later with construction of the park's first visitor center.<sup>75</sup>

Visitors had reason to be upset with village congestion, inadequate parking and overnight accommodations, long lines to obtain meals, and crowded interpretive facilities, but they could not complain about things to do or about prices, which remained tightly controlled despite postwar inflation.<sup>76</sup> In 1946 one could still enter the park for a dollar and stay forever at a free campsite. This offer proved so attractive that returning veterans, their families, and others stayed at the park's campgrounds while searching for regional housing, in short supply following the war. As for concession facilities, a single room without bath in the El Tovar cost only \$2.50, a one-room furnished cabin without bath in the Motor Lodge only \$2.25. Rooms at the El Tovar and Bright Angel Lodge (single room without bath, \$2.00) could be had on the European or American Plan, while the cost of meals at the El Tovar remained in line with the pre-park era: a dollar for breakfast and lunch and \$1.50 for a full dinner. Cheaper meals were offered at the Motor Lodge cafeteria and Bright Angel coffee shop. The Fred Harvey Company still offered auto, bus, horse, and mule trips into the canyon, along rim paths, and atop East and West Rim Drives at bargain prices: \$7.00 for an all-day Hermits Rest to Desert View ride with refreshments, \$6.00 for a full-day mule trip to the river with lunch, \$6.00 for a room and three meals at Phantom Ranch, and \$18.00 for an overnight Phantom Ranch trip that included room and meals.<sup>77</sup>

By 1955 prices had increased but remained well below inflation. One could enter the park for a dollar and remain fifteen days or pay two dollars for an indefinite stay, enjoying a campsite and all NPS interpretive services and facilities at no additional charge.<sup>78</sup> The cheapest rooms at the El Tovar cost only \$3.50. Bright Angel and Motor Lodge cabins had undergone substantive upgrades—including hot



Figure 34. Interior of the Naturalist's Workshop 1948. Louis Schellach is shown giving a personalized tour GRCA 1568; photo by M. Eden.

and cold running water, individual baths, and water heaters—but still rented for only \$3.00. Meals at the El Tovar had increased to \$1.50 for breakfast and lunch and \$2.00 for dinner, but cheaper repasts and à la carte service were still available at the coffee shop and cafeteria. The Fred Harvey Company had expanded its tours, and the cost of the all-day Hermits Rest-to-Desert View excursion had increased to only \$8.00 and the one-day mule trip to the river to \$10.00. Two-day trips to Phantom Ranch had become so popular, however, that the price jumped to \$32.75, with reservations required well in advance.<sup>79</sup> A stop at the El Tovar or Bright Angel Lodge transportation desks would secure multi-day trips to the Hopi villages and Havasu Canyon, Rainbow Bridge, Petrified Forest, the North Rim, and many other regional sites at reasonable cost. Fred Harvey literature still advertised the park as “an all-year-round resort,” and proffered many entertainments free of charge. These included the El Tovar's art studio, Indian dances beside the Hopi House each afternoon, “cowboy musical programs” and dances several nights per week at Bright Angel Lodge, movies twice per week at the community building (open to tourists), and admission to Hermits Rest, Hopi House, Lookout Studio, and the Watchtower. The Fred Harvey Company also offered family rates and winter package tours in an effort to balance the summer boom/winter bust visitation cycle.<sup>80</sup>

## PROTECTION ISSUES

While park managers devoted more time and money to protection of employees, visitors, and aesthetic features of developed areas, administrators at the headquarters level continued to play the lead role in looking after the park's integrity, with varying degrees of success. Boundary studies had been completed immediately after the war, but the only adjustment made in ensuing years was the acquisition of 1,120 acres in the vicinity of Hull Tank and Moran Point, known collectively as the "Hull Tank Addition." This transfer from the national forest took place in August 1951 and created a greater buffer between hunters and tourists along East Rim Drive.<sup>81</sup> The General Land Office through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s methodically exchanged parcels of the public domain for tens of thousands of state-owned inholdings. By 1942 the last of these had been acquired, bringing total federal holdings to 645,120 acres. The government bought the Buggeln ranch in 1948 and the Rowe Well mining claims in 1956, adding another 200 acres. The land office also exchanged several thousand acres of state lands within Grand Canyon National Monument during the 1930s and 1940s, bringing total federal acreage there to 196,051 by 1949.<sup>82</sup>

Since the 1930s, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officials had worked together to keep Grand Canyon's approach roads free of billboards, tawdry enterprises, unnecessary developments of any type, litter, and logging to maintain a natural-looking veneer for tourists nearing the park. In the mid-1930s Superintendent Tillotson had successfully lobbied John Collier of the BIA to keep Navajos from setting up craft and jewelry stands beside the new road from Cameron and persuaded John Verkamp to remove billboards he had erected along the road from Williams. As the Arizona Strip lumber industry began to emerge in 1948, Harold Bryant, aware of forest service plans to harvest trees within the central Kaibab Plateau, requested a 1,200-foot "scenic easement" along the road from Jacob Lake. In the same year Bryant observed that mining claims had been filed at the intersection of U.S. 66 and AZ 64, ostensibly to harvest building stone, which the superintendent did not believe for a minute. When the claimants applied for patent several years later to build a service station and automotive camp, park and forest officials foiled the entrepreneurs' plans. By 1950 park officials had convinced Arizona's senators to introduce bills to protect "scenic values" along canyon approaches, one of which was signed into law in July 1951 protecting the South Approach Road. It is also probable that they offered their support, certainly their gratitude, for the passage of Arizona's anti-littering law in 1953.<sup>83</sup>

More complicated and tenacious issues concerning the park's integrity made their appearance soon after the war. Foremost were imminent threats to build dams creating reservoirs within western parks and monuments. Entrepreneurs had envisioned smaller dams within Grand Canyon soon after the turn of the century, including somewhat serious intentions to impound the Colorado River at the mouth of Diamond Creek and tributaries at the mouth of Bright Angel Creek, within Tapeats Narrows astride Garden Creek, and among the waterfalls of Havasu Canyon. Greater danger was posed by the Colorado River Compact (signed in 1922), river surveys of the 1910s and 1920s, and the federal government's commitment to build dams to supply water and power to support a new wave of western immigration and extractive industries.<sup>84</sup> These projects, to be undertaken with the technical expertise of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, fostered debate at congressional, presidential, and judiciary levels of government, reducing the National Park Service to one special interest group among many.

Although they lacked legislative authority, NPS administrators since 1919 had successfully fought dozens of efforts to invade the parks with water projects large and small.<sup>85</sup> In the early 1930s they had not opposed construction of Bridge Canyon Dam because they did not recognize the lower canyon's scenic value and tourism potential and because the dam site had been selected before creation of Grand Canyon National Monument. As more definitive building plans emerged after the war, conservation groups like the Sierra Club were similarly unconcerned for a high power dam at the site, reasoning that it and the resulting reservoir would be unobtrusive in the remote location, flood nothing of great significance, and open that portion of the canyon to recreation.<sup>86</sup> In 1948, however, the NPS began to speak out against the dam, apparently forgetting earlier administrators' apathy and taking a line more consistent with Stephen Mather's opposition to all such proposals within the parks and monuments. They also condemned what they considered a more serious threat: a proposal to build a dam within Marble Canyon that would divert the Colorado's flow through a fifty-four-mile-long tunnel beneath the Kaibab Plateau to a hydroelectric plant beside Kanab Creek, just above the headwaters of the proposed Bridge Canyon reservoir.<sup>87</sup>

The Kaibab project was eliminated from Colorado River Storage Project considerations by 1949. NPS director Conrad Wirth expressed relief that the river between Marble Canyon and Kanab Creek would not be reduced to the flow of the Little Colorado, but debates over Bridge Canyon Dam persisted.<sup>88</sup> Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman, although he had approved the construction of



Figure 35. The first (and only) plane to land within the canyon, at Plateau Point, on 8 August 1922. G&A 5235; Fred Harvey Company photo

dams at Dinosaur National Monument in 1950, was successful in his efforts to amend Senate Bill 75 to limit Bridge Canyon Dam to an elevation of 1,877 feet above sea level. This was a compromise position,

since a dam this size would still flood the river through the monument and eighteen miles within the park, but given the political atmosphere and Bureau of Reclamation's power in the mid-1950s, it is unlikely that the NPS or anyone else could have accomplished more.

In any event, the issue faded temporarily when the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs tabled the dam's authorization until California and Arizona resolved their battles over Colorado River allocations. This would not happen until the following decade when the two states worked out agreements that would authorize Arizona's Central Arizona Project, triggering a new round of controversy over dams within Grand Canyon.<sup>89</sup>

A more persistent issue taking shape after the war concerned the presence and role of aircraft within the parks. Stephen Mather first addressed the matter in 1919 when he noted their presence at Yosemite and Grand Canyon and began to receive proposals for scenic flight tours at Yellowstone and Glacier.<sup>90</sup> Mather understood that aviation would play some role within the parks, perhaps encouraging an airway above his cherished park-to-park highway or scenic flights above some units, and almost certainly approving of flights for administrative and fire-sup-

pression purposes. His principal concerns were for passenger safety, given aircraft's experimental nature, and for allowing "greater accessibility to the park regions in this manner." Uncertainty persisted, but by the early 1930s Horace Albright had begun to set policy whereby air service would be considered on a park-by-park basis but, in nearly all cases, would not originate nor terminate within park boundaries.<sup>91</sup>

This limited policy continued through the war years, but with renewed attention and technology advanced by World War II, administrators knew that the

entire issue of aircraft and the national parks would have to be addressed. In 1944 the NPS clarified its policy that landing fields and associated buildings, like rail and bus terminals, would be located outside park boundaries, as would experiments with "air-transport, helicopter, or private plane." This decision was based on beliefs that landings and take-offs were the most dangerous moments of air travel, that facilities within parks were unnecessary intrusions since they could easily be built on adjacent lands, and that noise at take-off would disrupt the "serenity and peace" sought by visitors and might also bother wildlife. Administrators held fast to their ban on inner-park airports despite protests from aviators and their growing industry, but assisted the Civil Aeronautics Administration and inter-departmental committees to build adjacent airports to serve park visitors. At the same time, they tried unsuccessfully to implement regulations that would set overflight ceilings and otherwise control operations surrounding the parks.<sup>92</sup>

Aircraft appeared within hours of Grand Canyon becoming a national park when, on the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth of February 1919, Lieut. R.O. Searles, in command of a squadron of DeHaviland 450-horsepower bombers, followed a triangular pattern out of Kingman to make several flights above and below the canyon's rims from Diamond Creek to the Little Colorado River.<sup>93</sup> In the same year Stephen Mather wrote that private operators proposed to establish regular service connecting the North and South Rims. He acknowledged the advantages in bypassing the trail corridor and treacherous wagon roads, as well as the fact that the most comprehensive views could be obtained

from the air. Still, he questioned the efficacy of air service, citing the need for aircraft to climb as high as 14,000 feet for safety, and welcomed additional tests. Lieutenant Alexander Pearson flew up from Nogales in June 1921 and, based out of Williams Field, made fourteen flights totaling twenty-two hours above and below the rim. Pearson judged that a rim-to-rim connection was feasible if landing strips were located at least two miles back from the abyss to afford space to gain altitude. In August 1922 R.V. Thomas, with Ellsworth Kolb as cameraman, flew from Williams and made the first landing and takeoff within the canyon at a promontory of the Tonto Platform called “Turtle Head” near Plateau Point. Thomas made a return flight ten days later with a cameraman from the Fox Weekly motion-picture company.<sup>94</sup>

These early trips, without serious mishap, persuaded administrators that planes could be used at Grand Canyon for administrative purposes, but they rejected requests for landing fields within the park and remained uncertain about the future of commercial sightseeing flights. Scenic Airways established such a service in 1927, obtaining a forest service permit to build facilities and a landing strip just north of Red Butte. In 1929 they inaugurated transcanyon flights after clearing a strip on the North Rim at VT Park, just south of the Kaibab Lodge. Because Scenic Airways had safely served 7,200 passengers by that year with dependable tri-motor planes, Superintendent Tillotson agreed to a contract between the airline and Fred Harvey Company whereby business was solicited and flights sold from the El Tovar and Bright Angel Lodge. Scenic Airways ceased operations in 1929, but the following year sold its interests to another reliable operator, Grand Canyon Air Lines, which reinstated regular flights in April 1930 and expanded tours to other regional panoramas. The airline won the support of park administrators, who considered a concession contract the following year and began to send NPS naturalists along on flights in 1932.<sup>95</sup>

If flight operations had remained based at Red Butte and VT Park (about fifteen miles back from each rim) and overflights few, unobtrusive, and without mishap, it is unlikely that aircraft would have become a major issue at Grand Canyon. Nothing remained as it was after the war, however. More tourists with greater wealth flocked to the national park, and entrepreneurs with technological innovations and designs on visitor dollars crept closer to its boundaries. Administrators would not equivocate in their prohibition of landing fields along the rim, but did welcome the appearance of a third airfield at Valle that would be served by national airlines and promised to bring more visitors to the park. At the same time, Superintendent Bryant as early as 1947 considered “air-borne” visitors “one of the most important policy matters” facing the service, akin to the

challenges posed in 1913 when automobiles had first begun to impact the parks.<sup>96</sup>

Bryant’s personal concern stemmed from low-flying planes that had begun to buzz the village and mule parties below the rim, but he took even greater exception to the arrival of commercial helicopters—machines that could hover a few feet above ground and land just about anywhere. His genuine distaste arose from the efforts of Edwin J. Montgomery, president of a small company named Arizona Helicopter Service, to base scenic flights within the park in 1949. When Bryant rejected his proposal, Montgomery tried a few political end runs, then arranged to fly out of the Tusayan Auto Court, where he also operated a nightclub and restaurant. His operations lasted only a few months, from June through November 1950, but in that brief span he unnerved park staff and visitors alike by hovering near interpretive programs at Yavapai Observation Station and elsewhere along the rim. He also approached Madelaine Jacobs and managers of the Hearst estate to establish landing facilities at the Orphan Mine beside the rim and on the Hearst Tract along the river. Threats ended only when Montgomery wrecked one of his two helicopters (while airlifting members of the Hudson-Marston river party) in June and the other in November. Grounded and awaiting parts, the superintendent’s “air-borne” nemesis gave it up and moved to New Jersey, but the experience caused park administrators to look askance at this recreational activity from that year forward.<sup>97</sup>

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Dams, aircraft, and other complex issues that were begun or aggravated by national wealth, new technology, regional immigration, and greater exploitation of the Southwest would loom large at Grand Canyon in the years ahead, but in the period bracketed by the second world war and financial readjustments administrators clung to the ups and downs of ingrained policy. Their principal goals remained the proliferation and maintenance of administrative and concession facilities for the comfort and edification of visitors, followed by protection of the scenic resource. The war itself mitigated administrative demands, but the tourist onslaught in its aftermath, along with static funding, post-war inflation, personnel ceilings, and reduced work weeks, produced a sense of failure. Systemwide, the National Park Service lost some of its focus as it was called upon to do more for national recreation planning. At the local level, managers faced new challenges like utility operations, safety precautions, vandalism, littering, and escalating complaints from the public they tried to serve. Caught in the maelstrom and, by these years, not inclined to think in terms of limits to visitation, it is small wonder that they longed for more funds and personnel to catch up with tourist demands.



