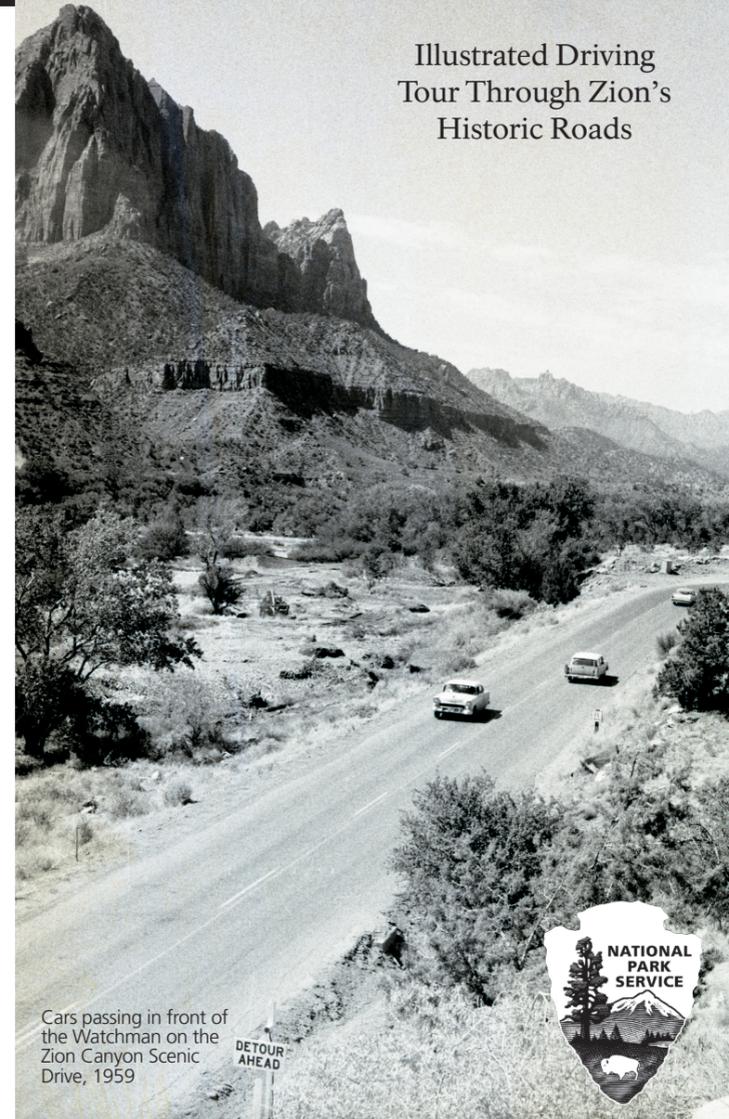


Zion History Guide

Illustrated Driving Tour Through Zion's Historic Roads



Cars passing in front of the Watchman on the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, 1959

Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway

After 4 years of surveying and planning, construction began on the highway through Zion's east side in 1927. The road formed an east-west connection in the "Grand Circle" tourist loop envisioned by the Utah Parks Company (a subsidiary of the Union Pacific Railroad), linking Zion with Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. The highway was a collaboration between the NPS and Bureau of Public Roads, and was formally opened with a dedication ceremony on July 4, 1930.

3. Switchbacks

Six switchbacks cut into the soft sandstone of Pine Creek Canyon allow the highway to climb 800' in 3.5 miles from the canyon floor to the tunnel. Due to frequent rock falls, CCC crews picked loose rocks from the slopes above the highway to stabilize the hillside in the 1930s. They also constructed sandstone masonry guardrails and retaining walls along the switchbacks.



CCC workers stabilizing the hillside between switchbacks, 1937



Bridge over North Fork of Virgin River at Canyon Junction, 1945

1. Virgin River Bridge

Replacing a previously constructed steel arch girder bridge located upstream, this 185-foot long bridge consists of two 34-foot sandstone piers supporting an I-beam deck structure and concrete roadway. 54-inch wide Redwood slabs and guardrails are bolted to the beams to disguise the superstructure. To accommodate larger vehicles, the sidewalks were removed and roadway widened in 1960.



West entrance to Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel, 1929

5. Tunnel

The 1.1-mile Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel is the longest vehicular tunnel in the National Park system. The first parts to be built were six large windows, or "galleries," which were blasted out of the sandstone cliff. Pilot tunnels were then bored and drilled towards each other, connecting the galleries. These narrow tunnels were then enlarged to a width of 22' and a height of 16' using dynamite and air shovels.



7. Clear Creek Bridge

The original bridge over Clear Creek was constructed in 1930 as part of the new highway. It was a concrete arch bridge with a girder and floor beam system. The deck structure and railing were cast-in-place concrete. It was demolished in 1992 and replaced with the simpler beam bridge you see today.

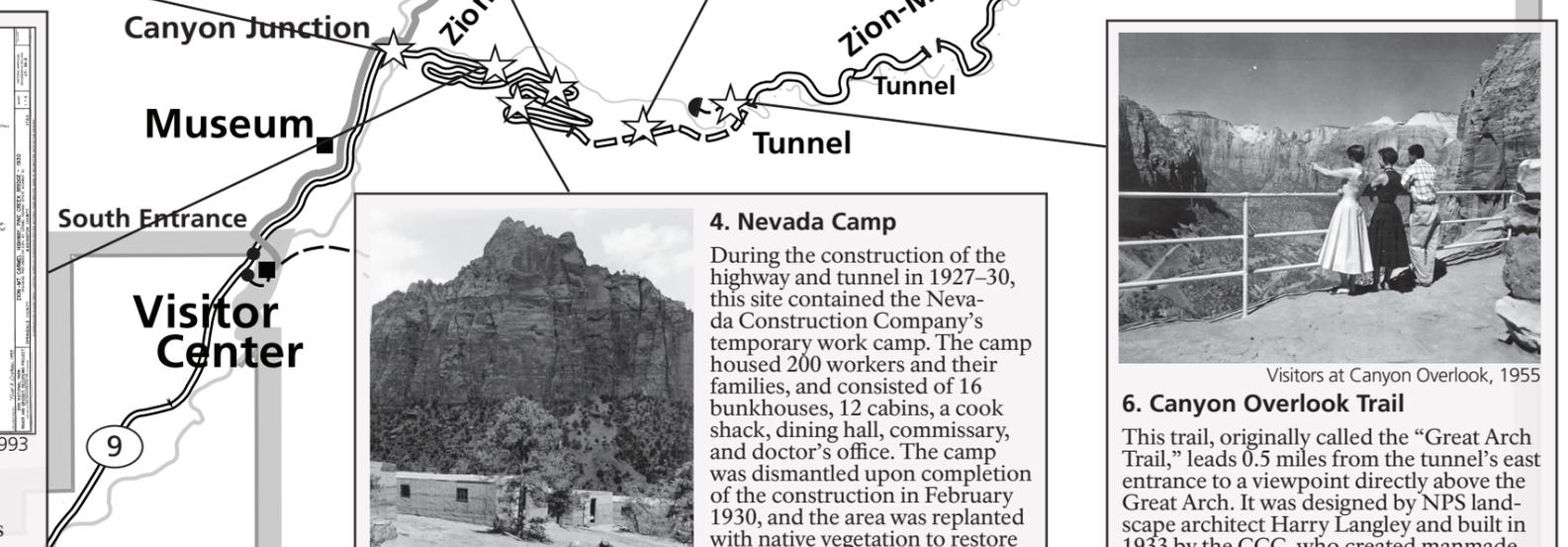
Clear Creek Bridge prior to demolition, 1992

9. East Rim Trail

This portion of the East Rim Trail, historically known as the East Entrance Trail or East Rim Truck Trail, was originally constructed in 1935 as a dirt road allowing vehicular traffic into the park for protection and administration purposes. The truck trail provided access to a CCC camp at Jolley Wash and connected to the old wagon road at Stave Spring (now the Cable Mountain Trail).



East Rim Truck Trail under construction, 1935



Visitors at Canyon Overlook, 1955

8. Co-op Creek Bridge

The original Co-op Creek Bridge was a 97-foot long reinforced concrete girder bridge. Built in 1929, it consisted of three steel T-beams supported by six rectangular concrete piers. Like the nearby Clear Creek Bridge, it was demolished and replaced with a beam bridge in 1992.



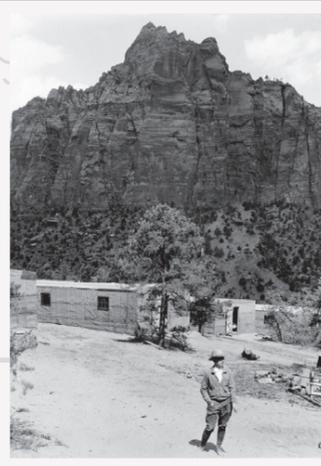
Co-op Creek bridge prior to demolition, 1992

6. Canyon Overlook Trail

This trail, originally called the "Great Arch Trail," leads 0.5 miles from the tunnel's east entrance to a viewpoint directly above the Great Arch. It was designed by NPS landscape architect Harry Langley and built in 1933 by the CCC, who created manmade features such as chiseled steps, sandstone block retaining walls, metal pipe railings, and a wood plank footbridge.

4. Nevada Camp

During the construction of the highway and tunnel in 1927-30, this site contained the Nevada Construction Company's temporary work camp. The camp housed 200 workers and their families, and consisted of 16 bunkhouses, 12 cabins, a cook shack, dining hall, commissary, and doctor's office. The camp was dismantled upon completion of the construction in February 1930, and the area was replanted with native vegetation to restore it back to its original state.



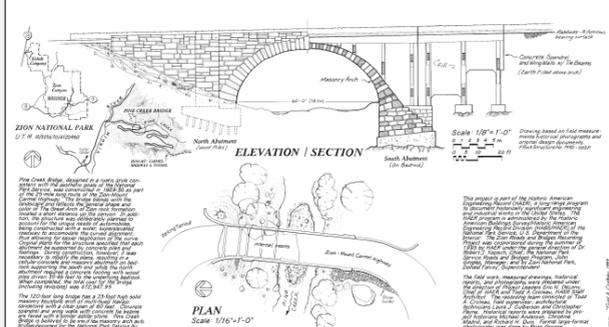
Stanley Bray, Superintendent of Nevada Construction Company, with camp bunkhouses in background, 1928

Museum

South Entrance

Visitor Center

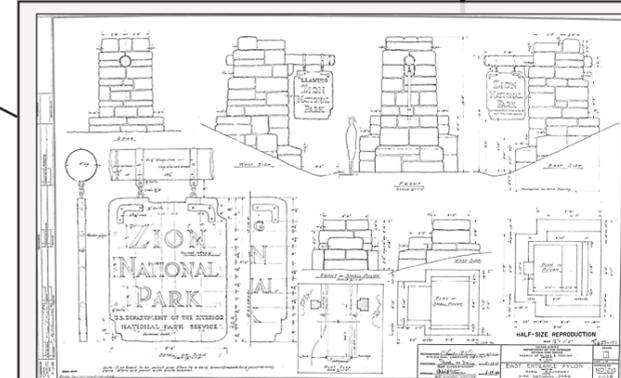
PINE CREEK BRIDGE 1930



Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) drawing, 1993

2. Pine Creek Bridge

This bridge was constructed in 1929-30 as part of the new highway to the east side of the park. Its original specifications described a 60-foot span and keystone arch supported by concrete piles and footings. The reinforced concrete understructure is covered with native sandstone and ashlar masonry, allowing the bridge to complement its natural surroundings and harmonize with the local setting.



Architectural drawing of East Entrance Pillar, 1936

10. East Entrance Sign

CCC crews built the east side entrance sign in 1935 and fee station in 1934. Zion's east entrance had been accessible since the highway was completed in 1930. Like its counterpart at the park's south entrance, this structure consists of a wooden hanging sign attached to a pillar made of large sandstone blocks quarried from within the park.