

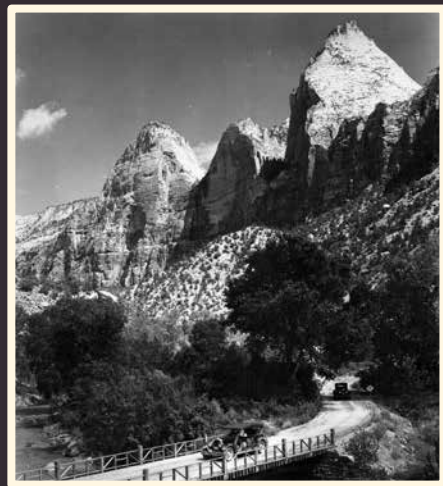
Zion History Guide



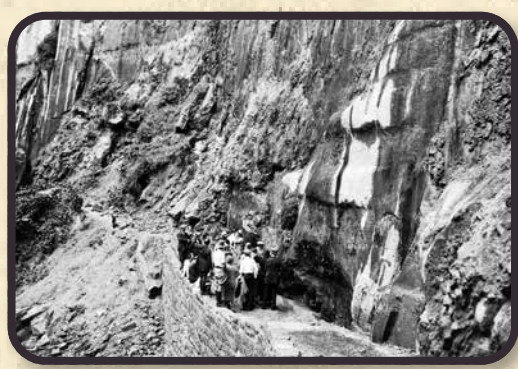
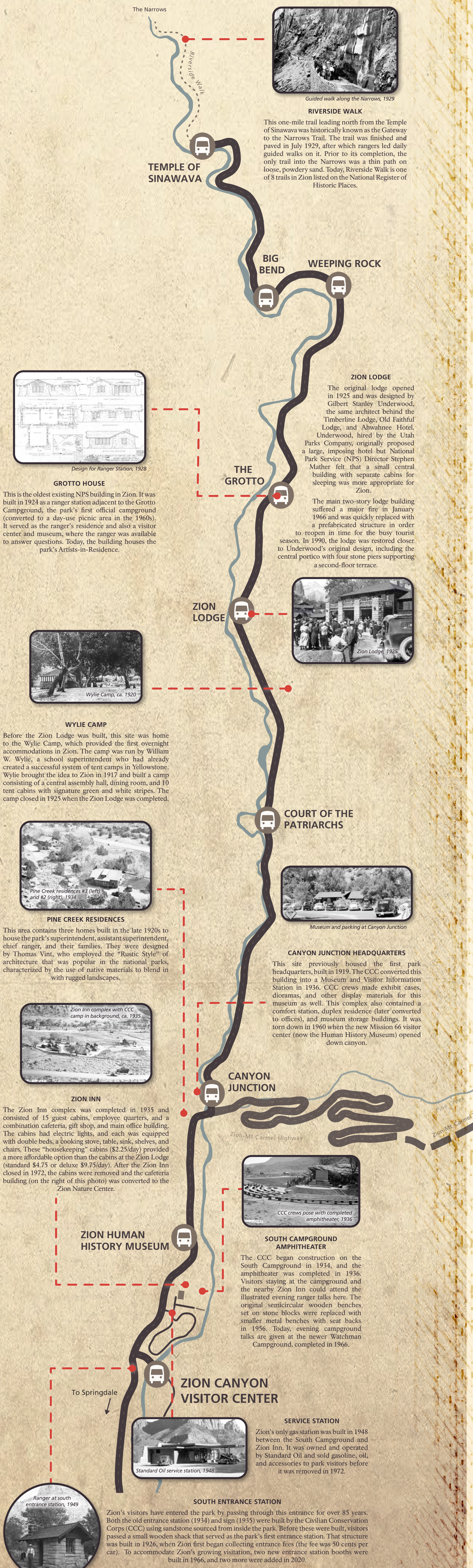
A Tour Through Zion's
Historic Structures & Roads

ZION CANYON SCENIC DRIVE

Historically called the Floor of the Valley Road, this is the third road built in Zion. A primitive wagon trail provided the first access to the canyon until an automobile road was constructed in 1917 as far as the Cable Works at what is now the Weeping Rock Parking Area. In 1925, a new gravel "Government Road" was constructed that went all the way to the Temple of Sinawava. The Floor of the Valley Road was built in 1931-32 using improved road building standards and following a new alignment closer to the Virgin River. The road was designed and constructed to blend with its surroundings, using a red tinted chip-sealer on the road surface and native sandstone blocks in the retaining walls and other features.



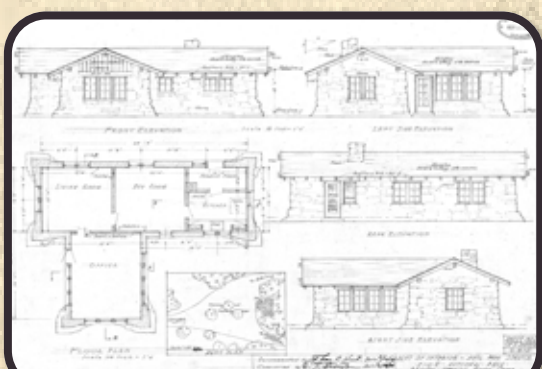
Vehicles crossing the Virgin River on the old "Government Road," 1929



Guided walk along the Narrows, 1929

RIVERSIDE WALK

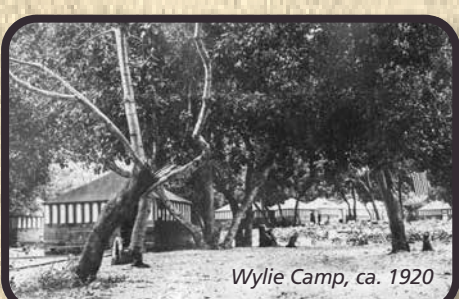
This one-mile trail leading north from the Temple of Sinawava was historically known as the Gateway to the Narrows Trail. The trail was finished and paved in July 1929, after which rangers led daily guided walks on it. Prior to its completion, the only trail into the Narrows was a thin path on loose, powdery sand. Today, Riverside Walk is one of 8 trails in Zion listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Design for Ranger Station, 1928

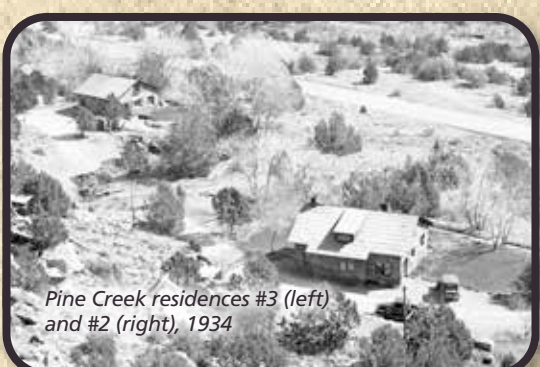
GROTTO HOUSE

This is the oldest existing NPS building in Zion. It was built in 1924 as a ranger station adjacent to the Grotto Campground, the park's first official campground (converted to a day-use picnic area in the 1960s). It served as the ranger's residence and also a visitor center and museum, where the ranger was available to answer questions. Today, the building houses the park's Artists-in-Residence.



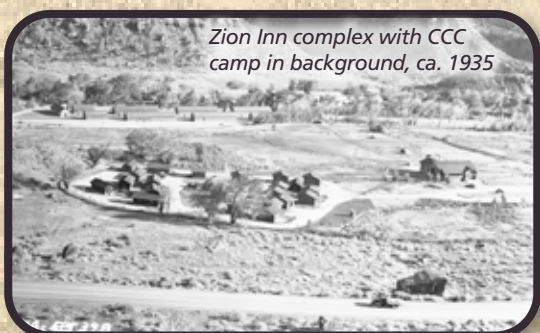
WYLIE CAMP

Before the Zion Lodge was built, this site was home to the Wylie Camp, which provided the first overnight accommodations in Zion. The camp was run by William W. Wylie, a school superintendent who had already created a successful system of tent camps in Yellowstone. Wylie brought the idea to Zion in 1917 and built a camp consisting of a central assembly hall, dining room, and 10 tent cabins with signature green and white stripes. The camp closed in 1925 when the Zion Lodge was completed.



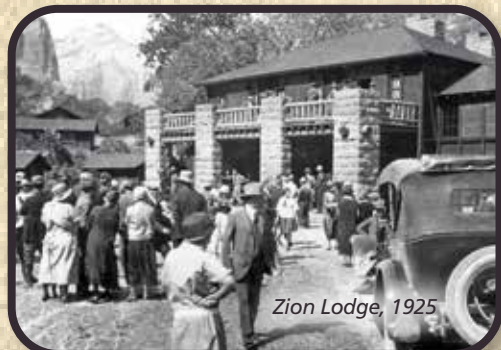
PINE CREEK RESIDENCES

This area contains three homes built in the late 1920s to house the park's superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief ranger, and their families. They were designed by Thomas Vint, who employed the "Rustic Style" of architecture that was popular in the national parks, characterized by the use of native materials to blend in with rugged landscapes.



ZION INN

The Zion Inn complex was completed in 1935 and consisted of 15 guest cabins, employee quarters, and a combination cafeteria, gift shop, and main office building. The cabins had electric lights, and each was equipped with double beds, a cooking stove, table, sink, shelves, and chairs. These "housekeeping" cabins (\$2.25/day) provided a more affordable option than the cabins at the Zion Lodge (standard \$4.75 or deluxe \$9.75/day). After the Zion Inn closed in 1972, the cabins were removed and the cafeteria building (on the right of this photo) was converted to the Zion Nature Center.



ZION LODGE

The original lodge opened in 1925 and was designed by Gilbert Stanley Underwood, the same architect behind the Timberline Lodge, Old Faithful Lodge, and Ahwahnee Hotel. Underwood, hired by the Utah Parks Company, originally proposed a large, imposing hotel but National Park Service (NPS) Director Stephen Mather felt that a small central building with separate cabins for sleeping was more appropriate for Zion.

The main two-story lodge building suffered a major fire in January 1966 and was quickly replaced with a prefabricated structure in order to reopen in time for the busy tourist season. In 1990, the lodge was restored closer to Underwood's original design, including the central portico with four stone piers supporting a second-floor terrace.



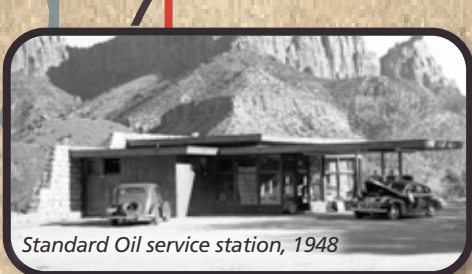
CANYON JUNCTION HEADQUARTERS

This site previously housed the first park headquarters, built in 1919. The CCC converted this building into a Museum and Visitor Information Station in 1936. CCC crews made exhibit cases, dioramas, and other display materials for this museum as well. This complex also contained a comfort station, duplex residence (later converted to offices), and museum storage buildings. It was torn down in 1960 when the new Mission 66 visitor center (now the Human History Museum) opened down canyon.



SOUTH CAMPGROUND AMPHITHEATER

The CCC began construction on the South Campground in 1934, and the amphitheater was completed in 1936. Visitors staying at the campground and the nearby Zion Inn could attend the illustrated evening ranger talks here. The original semicircular wooden benches set on stone blocks were replaced with smaller metal benches with seat backs in 1956. Today, evening campground talks are given at the newer Watchman Campground, completed in 1966.



SERVICE STATION

Zion's only gas station was built in 1948 between the South Campground and Zion Inn. It was owned and operated by Standard Oil and sold gasoline, oil, and accessories to park visitors before it was removed in 1972.



SOUTH ENTRANCE STATION

Zion's visitors have entered the park by passing through this entrance for over 85 years. Both the old entrance station (1934) and sign (1935) were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) using sandstone sourced from inside the park. Before these were built, visitors passed a small wooden shack that served as the park's first entrance station. That structure was built in 1926, when Zion first began collecting entrance fees (the fee was 50 cents per car). To accommodate Zion's growing visitation, two new entrance station booths were built in 1966, and two more were added in 2020.