

Unobtainable Elsewhere: The Grand Canyon, Mules, and the Photographers for
the National Park's Most Controversial Trail, 1901-1936

By

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ABSTRACT

Over the past one hundred thirty years, tourism at the Grand Canyon has been associated with mules. With the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway's arrival in 1901, canyon tourism was launched to a new level of popularity and with it the mule riding experience, both of which the railroad company intended to monopolize. One man more than any other sought to resist the railroad's controlling attempts. Ralph Cameron used loosely interpreted mining laws to claim ownership over not only thousands of canyon acres, but also the Bright Angel Trail, which he charged a one-dollar toll for stock to pass over. Cameron's political influence eventually earned him election both as a congressman and senator, a power he wielded to protect his assets. Situated at the trailhead, the Kolb Brothers photographic studio captured groups of descending riders each morning from 1904-1976. Located on contested ground, the studio's owners fought to protect their slice of canyon tourism from federal land agencies and the railroad company.

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INTRODUCTION

Mules at the Grand Canyon are one of the most recognizable attractions within the national park. Long before the Grand Canyon became a national park in 1919, the need for mules to negotiate the rugged terrain of the canyon's south rim shaped tourism. Getting to the park has evolved from railroads to highways, but inner canyon mule riders remain the most popular way to experience the canyon. How mules shaped the park experience and influenced the village's built environment is a gap in the historical literature. By taking a greater mule-centered approach, this thesis proposes to address that gap.

Ranked among the world's most impressive natural wonders, scores of books have addressed the canyon. Stephen Pyne's *How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History*, along with Michael Anderson's *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of the Grand Canyon National Park* and *Living on the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters, and Settlers of the Grand Canyon*, are the most authoritative historical works.¹ A valuable collection of essays, *Reflections of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts*, provides further insights into the canyon's human past. Ranging in perspectives from indigenous people's land issues to geologic theories and influential canyon residents, while also including a valuable bibliography, the authors addressed issues often neglected in historical accounts about the Grand Canyon.²

¹ Michael F Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 1998); Michael F Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000); Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).

² Todd Berger, *Reflections of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First-Person Accounts* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2008).

Before the National Park Service became canyon custodians, the United States Forest Service acted as canyon administrators. The agency's relationship with the Santa Fe Railroad was so cordial that when writing the 1916 Grand Canyon Working Plan, a multipage document crafted in response to ever-increasing tourism at the park, the agency referred to the railroad conglomerate simple as "The Company." The Santa Fe not only brought visitors to the canyon; its concessionaire, the Fred Harvey Company, ran the restaurants, hotels, and visitor services. Using the vernacular of 1916, the following research shall likewise frequently refer to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company, as "the Company." Additionally, the tourists who rode on the Company's mules were referred to as "dudes," a term also adopted in the following research.

As Virginia Gratten points out in her biography *Mary Colter: Builder upon Red Earth*, a biography of Mary Jane Colter, the railroad saw the Grand Canyon as an investment.³ Aimed at wealthy travelers, a detailed marketing strategy promoted tourist accommodations. The Company continued their advertising campaign well into the twentieth century, with such feats as the 1946 hit movie "The *Harvey Girls*" whose catchy theme song earned an Academy Award for Best Song and whose characters typified the generic interpretations of western populations. Through such promotional materials, the image of the National Park and The Company was intertwined in manner often indistinguishable to the average park visitor.

The Santa Fe Railroad, however, was not the first venture to craft a Grand Canyon image. Ralph Cameron and the Kolb Brothers were significant early

³ Virginia Gratten, *Mary Jane Colter: Builder on Red Earth* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon History Association, 2007).

entrepreneurs at the Grand Canyon. Cameron owned and operated the canyon's most popular trail as a toll road while Ellsworth and Emery Kolb established themselves as the primary photographers for the mule riders paying to use the trail. In doing so, both parties cornered a profitable slice of the tourist economy, one they maintained even under the Santa Fe's grasp. The railroad saw the Cameron and the Kolbs as nuisances to their ultimate goals of a tourism monopoly. Cameron, in particular, became a thorn in the sides of the railroad and federal land agencies. Later public interpretation portrayed Cameron and the Kolbs as "David" to the "Goliath" of the Company. The narrative surrounding the Grand Canyon thus became fraught with half-truths, misinformation, and flat out untrue statements.

The following research looks beyond the bus-stop history lessons to explore the influence of Ralph Cameron, the Kolb Brothers, and mules on the park's early tourism development. Cameron has his champions. Blaine Lambs' 1977 "Many Checkered Toga: Arizona Senator Ralph H. Cameron 1921-1927" and Douglas Strong's 1978 "Ralph Cameron and the Grand Canyon" are dated and new primary sources call for reconsideration.⁴

The Kolbs also have their champions, starting in 1913, when the popular novelist Owen Wister added a foreword to Ellsworth Kolb's *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico*.⁵ Due to a long life, Emery Kolb also proved to be a great

⁴ Blaine Lamb, *A Many Checkered Toga: Arizona Senator Ralph H. Cameron 1921-1927* (Arizona: Arizona and the West, 1977); Douglas Strong, *Ralph H. Cameron and the Grand Canyon & The Man Who Owned the Grand Canyon* (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 1978).

⁵ Ellsworth L. Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1958).

proselytizer for the brother's saga. When he passed away in 1976, Emery had outlived or outlasted nearly everyone who could validate or dispute the claims he made later in life, many of which have become germ of stories still repeated today. However, scholars have considered the Kolbs. Michael Pace's 1983 journal article *Emery Kolb and the Fred Harvey Company* takes a close look at the Kolb's battle with the Company. William Suran edited and transcribed the journals kept by the Kolbs during their 1911-1912 river trip in *The Brave Ones: The Journals and Letters of the 1911-12 Expedition Down the Green and Colorado River*. Suran's biography *With the Wings of an Angel: A Biography of Emery Kolb* never found a publisher.⁶ Suran then generously placed his manuscript online for public viewing. Roger Naylor's *The Amazing Kolb Brothers of the Grand Canyon*, published in 2016 by the Grand Canyon Association, is the most recent account but it is largely a collection of stories told by guides.⁷

Primary sources to correct the record are plentiful. The Kolb Collection has personal and business records, along with 250,000 photographs and over twenty thousand of those are of mule riding parties from 1902-1976. The collection contains the single largest photo collection of the Grand Canyon, in both size and range of time, found in any archive. A handful of their photos have become so popularized that they could now be considered "stock" photographs for the Grand Canyon. Historic newspapers also remain to be explored as a key primary source.

⁶ William Suran, *The Brave Ones* (Flagstaff: Fretwater Press, 2003); William Suran, *With the Wings of an Angel: A Biography of Emery Kolb* (<http://www.grandcanyonhistory.org/Publications/Kolb/kolb.html>).

⁷ Roger Naylor, *The Amazing Kolb Brothers of the Grand Canyon* (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 2016).

Fredrick Swanson's *Dave Rust: A Life in the Canyon* sheds important light on the early development of inner-canyon transportation networks. Swanson's reliance on primary sources offers helpful insights on the extent that livestock availability shaped development.⁸ Fred Shaw's *False Architect: The Mary Jane Colter Hoax* challenges the long-held understanding of Mary Jane Colter's role in designing many now iconic canyon buildings. While Shaw's examination is compelling, inconclusive peer-reviewed analysis leaves his work unsubstantiated.⁹ Douglas Brinkley's *Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* explores Roosevelt's efforts to enshrine the Grand Canyon under federal protection against exploiters. In Brinkley's book, he focuses on the legislative process taken by Roosevelt to protect the canyon first as a game preserve, then as a national monument.¹⁰

Ample archival materials from a wide range of historic Grand Canyon figures are stored across Arizona, many of them made available through the Arizona Archives Online database. The Grand Canyon National Park Research Library maintains troves of park related documentation including annual reports from super-intendants, mining claims, personal letters, diaries, and photographs.

The personal and business records of the notorious canyon resident Ralph Cameron are housed in the University of Arizona's Special Collection in Tucson, Arizona. Interestingly, scholars have not relied on this collection as often as would be expected for Grand Canyon history books. Contrastingly, scholars have turned to the Fred

⁸ Fredrick Swanson, *David Rust: A Life in the Canyon* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008).

⁹ Fred Shaw, *False Architect: The Mary Jane Colter Hoax* (Seattle: Amazon Digital Services, 2018).

¹⁰ Douglas Brinkley, *Wilderness Warrior: Teddy Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).

Harvey Company's archives extensively. When comparing the motives of Cameron and the railroad, are quite similar. Unfortunately, no scholar has drawn a comparative analysis between the two and their exploitation of the canyon.

Architectural studies are valuable secondary sources. In 1987, National Park Service designated the Grand Canyon Village as a National Historic Landmark District. The district's documentation offers a wealth of information on construction methods, materials, architects, and early building functions. The report, along with specific designations for individual buildings, have been tremendous resources for scholars researching the development of national parks and the people who helped create them. Though thoroughly cataloged in these reports, the most beneficial research comes from visiting the buildings, nearly all of which are still used daily at the national park.

Neither historians nor architects have adequately addressed the significance of the historic mule rides at the Grand Canyon. To understand how these animals operate in the harsh canyon environment, researchers would need to be familiar with the intricacies of both the mules and the canyon. Little has changed in both the equipment used by the mules and their human counterparts. The mule rides are a key part of the continuity of the park experience as they are living representations of traditional means of western transportation unobtainable in any archive. When used in conjuncture with the historic mule-party photos, this direct evidence deepens understanding of the park experience over the past one hundred twenty years. A common theme, particularly before the turn of the twenty-first century, showcased the mule rides as quant history. More recently, the mules have come under scrutiny on their environmental impact and their presence is

slowly being removed. The crucible years of 1901 through 1936 established a legacy of Grand Canyon mule rides which still persists today.

Chapter One: The Bright Angel Trail

The chug of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad's locomotive slowed to a stop near the two hotels, one controlled by the railroad company, the other by Ralph Cameron, along the Grand Canyon's south rim. The smell of burning coal and steam mingled with the caramel-toned fragrances of the ponderosa pine forest, as the squeal of grinding iron echoed off the canyon walls. With a shrill blast of the whistle, the first trainload of tourists stepped onto the wooden platform of the Grand Canyon Depot on September 17th, 1901 and launched a new chapter in what has become a multibillion-dollar tourist industry.¹

The first real lust for canyon exploration came from John Wesley Powell's successful 1869 descent from Green River, Wyoming, through the Grand Canyon's turbulent waters, before safely exiting at Needles, California. Powell, who had lost his right arm in the Battle of Shiloh and had to be lashed to a chair on top of his boat, helped launch the Grand Canyon into the national spotlight by the enormously popular publication of his journals and lecture tours. The Powell Expedition became famous. Until that voyage, the depths of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River, whose waters flow through it, were unknown to cartographers. Powell's studied the composition of rock layers and began drawing maps to fill in the uncharted landscape.² What Powell and his comrades achieved in 1869 cannot be repeated. With the building of Boulder Dam at

¹ J. Donald Hughes, *In the House of Stone and Light* (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Historical Association, 1978), 62.

² Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954), XV-XX.

the mouth of the canyon beginning in 1931 and then Glen Canyon Dam near the head of the Canyon in 1962, the waters of the Colorado River have become impounded and no longer flow freely through the Grand Canyon.

After the federal government forcefully subdued indigenous tribes, Anglo emigrants began to flood into northern Arizona. Among these arrivals was Ralph Cameron, who first arrived in Flagstaff, before eventually coming to the canyon in hopes of developing one of the several mineral veins being patented.³ In 1889, he made the arduous journey fifty miles to Prescott for jury duty. Irritated that he was only compensated two dollars for his time and travels, Cameron began advocating for the division of the enormous Yavapai County and the incorporation of Coconino County. These efforts led to Cameron becoming the first, and as the *New York Times* described him “gun-fanning” sheriff of the newly incorporated county, a position he held from 1891 to 1896.⁴

Cameron was just one of many Anglo transplants who viewed themselves as independent and resisted federal encroachment onto what they, ironically, saw as their own lands. The migrants considered Washington as outdated, unfamiliar, and uninterested in their needs. As for the railroad, much of the citizenry saw them as a governmental paramour, gobbling up thousands of acres of prime real estate in a checkboard pattern following their tracks.⁵

³ Michael F Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Association, 1998) 69.

⁴ “Arizona Pioneer Ralph Cameron Dies in Capital,” *Index-Journal*, February 12, 1953, 1; “Arizona,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1921, 110.

⁵ Douglas Brinkley, *Wilderness Warrior: Teddy Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 751-755.

Among these emigrants, prospectors began trickling into the Grand Canyon's arid high desert landscape staking hopeful claims. In the Grand Canyon, rock slides are known to dislodge large chunks of asbestos, lead, copper and zinc. Though high-grade ore was found in abundance in the Grand Canyon's depths, the proximity to viable transportation hubs and processing facilities proved a burdensome task and one that did not produce many wealthy prospectors.⁶

Miners such as Pete Berry, John Hance, and William Wallace Bass, early on realized that the best way to make money off the Grand Canyon was not to dig into her walls, but rather, into the wallets of tourists willing to pay to see her. In the late 1880's and until rail tracks to the rim were laid in 1901, the quickest way to get to the Grand Canyon was to disembark in either Flagstaff or Williams, then take an overnight buggy on the road built by Bill Bass across the Kaibab Plateau's wooded, undulating landscape. Upon arrival at the rim, tourists were offered modest accommodations at Hance's Grandview Hotel, Bass's Camp, or the Bright Angel Hotel. These hotels were initially nothing more than canvas wall tents with a log cabin acting as the office and dining facility.⁷

The railroad's arrival at the Grand Canyon was the brain child of Bucky O'Neal, the infamous cowboy legend and one-time sheriff of Prescott, Arizona. In the last years of the nineteenth century, O'Neill's interests had turned to mining. He successfully developed claims in the Anita mining district, a blanket deposit of Kaibab Limestone

⁶Michael F Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Association, 1998), 33-40.

⁷ Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 33-40.

with intermittent veins of copper, located roughly fifteen miles south of the Grand Canyon's rim.⁸ As the Spanish-American War broke out in the spring of 1898, the freeze on the sale of bonds and O'Neill's military enlistment stalled the Santa Fe & Grand Canon Railroad's launch. O'Neill was killed while rolling a cigarette during the legendary charge on San Juan Heights, his death marking a transition in tourist development.⁹

The rail line, which ran through areas first protected in 1893 as a designated Federal Forest Reserve, required Congressional approval to begin construction. Congress granted permission on May 18th, 1898.¹⁰ By June of 1899, nearly a year after O'Neill's death, one hundred teams of horses and mules pulled behind them graders as they began carving out the high desert landscape to establish the rail route to the mines. The New York firm Lombard, Goode, & Company, who had already built a smelter in Williams financed the railroad. The firm also became the chief promoters of the copper mines after O'Neill sold the financiers his shares. Surveyors' stakes lined the right of way as crews scraped what the *Los Angeles Times* called the "most feasible route" for their steam-powered locomotives towards Rowe's Well, a naturally flowing spring set back about three miles from the rim of the canyon, before completing the tracks to the rim.¹¹ From here, a spur line was planned to extend east towards the confluence of the Little Colorado River.

⁸ "Construction of Grand Canyon Railroad Begun." *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1899, 3.

⁹ "Touching Incident: Flowers Placed on A Rough Rider's Grave." *Washington Evening Star*, December 26, 1902, 6; O'Neill was later portrayed by Sam Elliot in the 1998 movie *Rough Riders*.

¹⁰ United States Congress House of Representatives, *An Act Granting the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railroad Company Right of Way for Railroad Purposes Through the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve in Northern Arizona*, H. R. 2 Fifty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, 1898.

¹¹ "Construction of Grand Canyon Railroad Begun," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1899,3.

Water, the canyon's sculptor, is found in sparing amounts throughout the Northern Arizona strip. But the mines and the availability of water were not the only alluring force for the proposed rail line. At that time, a consortium of miners owned The Bright Angel Trail, an ancient path into the bowels of the canyon, used for centuries by the Havasupai, Walapai, Hopi, and other tribes of the region, before the miners used it to access their inner-canyon copper claims.¹² In 1891, Pete Berry, John McClure, and Niles Cameron, along with a man Ralph Cameron paid to contribute his share of the work, spent a cold December rerouting the ancient footpath to accommodate their livestock, which they used to haul ore on the backs of burros, horses, and mules from their claims beneath the rim. In January, Pete Berry traveled to Flagstaff, the Coconino County seat, to incorporate the trail as a toll road. Seeking the turquoise colored rock indicating oxidized copper, they blasted exploratory shafts in various sections of the basin. The pay loads were hardly viable sources; nonetheless, the men continued to lay claims through the canyon and on the rim.

As the rail ties crept ever nearer the rim, the Camerons, McClure, and Berry along with seventeen other miners, sold off their claims in the Grand View area to a New York firm. The sale, brokered by Ralph Cameron, required him to travel east on a six-week tour to negotiate the arrangement worth over \$100,000. When the deal was finalized, the *Arizona Republican* postulated it was "one of the greatest mining deals in Northern Arizona."¹³ With the transaction secured and having fostered helpful political connections, Cameron returned with the intention to consolidate his existing claims in the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Sale of Arizona Mine," *Arizona Republican*, August 29, 1900,3.

Bright Angel region. Bankrolled by his profits from the sale of the claims, Cameron quickly went to work establishing a strategically positioned domain of mining claims throughout the rim and the canyon's interior. The rail line's trajectory was known—the Bright Angel Trailhead — where as early as the summer of 1899, investors discussed plans to build a new hotel and inner canyon retreat around the springs at Indian Gardens were discussed.¹⁴

Ralph Cameron and Bucky O'Neill were friends, but neither was above bending that law to make money off an opportunity. O'Neill became familiar with the Bright Angel Trail when he led a work detail to improve the path for tourist travel.¹⁵ Once becoming aware he was treading on private property, O'Neill abandoned his efforts at trail improvements, turning instead at fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with Ralph Cameron. For O'Neill, he would bring the tourists on his railroad, and Cameron, the assumed owner of the trail, would benefit from collecting innumerable tolls from the trainloads of thrill-seeking tourists who could also stay at his hotel.¹⁶ O'Neill's untimely death in Cuba signaled a critical shift in the development of the Grand Canyon as a tourist attraction.

When the price for copper dropped suddenly in 1901, the tracks only extended as far as the Anita district. In early July 1901, the bankrupt Santa Fe & Grand Canyon Railroad's construction ground to halt. Within days, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe

¹⁴ "Construction of Grand Canyon Railroad Begun," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1899, 3.

¹⁵ Mike Anderson, National Register of Historic Places, "Bright Angel Trail," Grand Canyon Historic District, Grand Canyon, Coconino County, Arizona, listed on June 30, 1992.

¹⁶ "Sale of Arizona Mine," *Arizona Republican*, August 29, 1900,3; Senator Ralph Cameron, Proceedings and Debates, 69th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXVII, pt. 2: 12971-12973. Both sources name Ralph Cameron as a principal owner of the mines at Anita. It indicates that O'Neill and Cameron were involved in capital interests pertaining to both mining and the budding tourist economy.

Railroad, the titan of power, wealth, and transportation, whose rail network extended from Chicago to Los Angeles resurrected the enterprise. The new company, the *Williams News* commented, “will proceed at once to a complete reorganization, and a road new in name and commencement will be evolved from the wreck of the old.”¹⁷ True to their word, the train made it to the rim by mid-September.

In the first two years the Santa Fe was established along the rim, accommodations slowly improved from the frontier conditions. The Kaibab Limestone is only inches beneath the top soil along much of the rim, which meant that adequate latrine holes could not be dug, resulting in alarming sanitation conditions. Refuse was tossed over the rim and rolled rocks became such a concern, worried individuals installed signs discouraging the practice.¹⁸ To accommodate thirsty tourists in the desert, thousands of gallons of water had to be brought in each morning with the daily arrival of the railroad. Among the smattering of curio shops, hotels, and eateries, tourists found split rail fences corralling herds of horses, mules, and burros used by the numerous guide services who offered trips into the canyon.

Mules, the sterile offspring of a mare horse and a jack donkey, quickly became the preferred animal for carrying dudes into the canyon. The hybrid had the carrying capacity of their mother combined with the surefootedness of their father. Making them additionally well suited for the Grand Canyon, mules could sustain on lower grade forage and travel longer distances without water. John Hance is credited with creating the mule-

¹⁷ “Locals,” *Williams News*, July 20, 1901, 4.

¹⁸ Michael F. Anderson. *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 1998), 89-92.

tourism industry, whose success convinced other guiding businesses to follow. For nearly two decades before the Santa Fe reached the Bright Angel trailhead canyon visitors rode along an inner canyon trail network. However, when the railroad arrived it immediately became the trail riding nucleus and no trail became more successful or more contentious than the Bright Angel.

Taking its name from a creek on whose banks John Wesley Powell and his men camped in August of 1869, Bright Angel Creek traces its way through twelve miles of canyon from the North Rim to the Colorado River six thousand feet below. Having named a silty, murky tributary the “Dirty Devil” 200 miles upstream, Powell sought the dichotomy of natural forces when naming the next clear water source; good versus evil, light versus dark, greed versus benevolence. Tectonic events millions of years ago in which the Bright Angel Fault ripped a zippering scar running North-South across the river’s East-West course made possible the ancient access originating on the South Rim to the Colorado River, some 5,000 feet below.¹⁹ The tectonic divergence created one of the few natural entry points along the South Rim. Not only did the plate’s movement create a sloping access point, it also fractured the aquifer underneath the Redwall Limestone Formation, releasing a constant flow of fresh water beneath the 400-foot cliff band; a rare occurrence in a landscape formed by wind and water. Surrounded by endless layers of rock, there was but one way to access the resource.

The Bright Angel Trail quickly became the focus of legal disputes. In July 1901, two months before the railroad completed its tracks to the canyon’s rim, the *Williams*

¹⁹ Michael F Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 4-8.

News posted a story mentioning that Ralph Cameron had won his first small victory against the railroad. District court Judge Sloan denied a railroad-sought injunction against Cameron's rights to operate the trail as a toll road.²⁰ The ruling was the first in a long-running legal battle.

When Pete Berry listed the trail with Coconino County on January 31, 1891, he signed only his name. The territorial statutes mandated that a franchise lasted ten years, with the opportunity for a five-year extension if the toll owner had not recuperated their investment. In 1901, as the initial decade of operation came to an end, and with only twenty-two days before the expiration date, Cameron applied for an extension and received it. He soon bought his partners out of their shares while also seeking an operational permit from Secretary of the Interior, Ethan Allen Hitchcock. Not waiting for a reply from the federal land administrator, Cameron began initiating a toll on the trail.

For the decade preceding the train's arrival, no toll had ever been collected. Now the steady stream of travelers arriving each morning found they were expected to pay a fee. Martin Buggeln, proprietor the Bright Angel Hotel, which lay on a railroad land grant, had partnered with the Santa Fe Railway to provide lodging and horse rides, of which half the profits were turned over to the Company. Complaining of the new taxation, the Santa Fe had Buggeln bring a suit of *quo warranto* against Niles Cameron who was then acting as toll keeper, challenging Cameron's legal right to collect tolls. The claim suggested that the toll road owners had forfeited their rights to possession after the trail became abandoned and furthermore, that a toll had never actually been taken.

²⁰ "Locals," *Williams News*, July 6, 1901, 2., "Bright Angel Trail: Decision Rendered in the Celebrated Case by Sec. Hitchcock," *Williams News*, July 2, 1904, 2.

Rather, prospectors and tourists used the trail free of charge. The suit caused the toll operation and ownership to be called into question at which point all toll collecting ceased until the matter could be resolved in the courts. The suit revealed that Berry, not Cameron, was the owner since the trail was under his name and the presiding judge ruled that ownership could not transfer.²¹

The Santa Fe simultaneously began initiating civil suits challenging the trail's legitimacy as a toll road in an effort to acquire or at least dislodge the current owners. Since Pete Berry had signed his name and his name alone on the original 1891 trail patent, the Company's lawyers argued exhaustively over the question of the trail's transferability. Additionally, on November 12, 1902, attorneys representing the Santa Fe Railway applied for a special use permit to maintain and operate the trail under the condition that the trail be an open throughway. When the General Land Office gave approval to the Santa Fe's contract, Cameron hired a lawyer to place an injunction on the contract until further evidence could be gathered.²²

Since the trail was located within a federally managed forest, the federal government felt entitled to an opinion on the matter. When Secretary Hitchcock denied Cameron's request for a license, Cameron planned to travel to Washington to appear in person, but not without first seeking two thirty-day extensions to further hobble the proceedings. Arriving in Washington, Cameron petitioned directly to President Roosevelt

²¹ "Bright Angel Trail: Decision Rendered in the Celebrated Case by Sec. Hitchcock," *Williams News*, July 2, 1904, 2; Margaret Verkamp, *History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Tempe: Grand Canyon Pioneer Society, 1940), 23-24.

²² Gifford Pinchot to William Loeb, Jr. May 12, 1906, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections and Archives, 19977, # 179113.
<http://archive.library.nau.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16748coll2/id/76/rec/1>

who then urged his secretary to reconsider. Though he seriously questioned local authority on the matter, Hitchcock eventually succumbed to the rationale, stating, “No reason appears in the present case (the rail company’s *quo warranto* claim) to interfere with the possession, control, or operation of the trail by those who located and constructed it under local law, prior to the creation of the reserve.” Hitchcock ruled that since the trail had been patented under territorial law two years prior to the Forest Reserve’s creation on February 20, 1893, local authority should be recognized. The district court Judge Sloan of the Territory of Arizona had already supported Cameron’s ownership of the trail and, hence, Hitchcock denied the railroad company’s claim.²³

Returning from his trip with the blessing of the Department of the Interior, Cameron set about exerting his authority over the trail. By February 1903, Cameron began taking the necessary requirements to lawfully enact his toll, including the construction of a toll booth. On February 11, 1903, Prescott’s *Weekly Journal Miner* mused the Santa Fe’s most recent failed attempt to dislodge Cameron “will probably end the contest.”²⁴

Sanguine in their determination not to be stopped by a few clever miners, the Santa Fe aggressively pursued its goal of economic domination. Though the trail was the only option for inner canyon access, its value was of course only created based on the

²³ Senator Ralph Cameron, Proceedings and Debates, 69th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record Bound LXVII*, pt. 2: 12971-12973; “Bright Angel Trail: Decision Rendered in the Celebrated Case by Sec. Hitchcock,” *Williams News*, July 2, 1904, 2. During this trip, newspaper accounts have Cameron visiting the grave of Bucky O’Neill on Christmas morning to lay a wreath upon his old friend’s tomb. Though no doubt mourning the loss of a friend, Cameron’s motives were more likely to politicize his friendship to the man the current president had also called a friend.

²⁴ “Cameron Trail,” *Weekly Journal- Miner*, February 4, 1903, 2.

growing popularity of the Grand Canyon, which was only made possible by the train. Reporting on the matter, the *Coconino Sun* determined, “there are two claims involved and the railroad wants them, or rather, does not want Cameron to have them . . . allows him to cut into the hotel business at the canyon.”²⁵ It was not so much that the railroad wanted to gain control of the toll road, so much as they did not want Cameron to benefit financially. Every dollar spent at other businesses or paying the toll, was a dollar not spent at one of the railroad’s, restaurants, souvenir shops or hotels. Furthermore, Cameron’s guide and mule service competed with the Santa Fe’s.²⁶

The basis of both Cameron and the railroad’s argument were found in the Territory of Arizona’s Revised Statutes of 1901. Within these clauses, a toll road’s rights and those of its operators were articulated. Paragraph 3999 of the Revised Statutes states that a toll road may be operated for a length of ten years, after which, and upon request, the county may grant the operator an additional five years of use by the county in which the road is located. After the allotted five-year extension, the rights of the toll road were to be offered to the county. Upon the trail’s transfer to the county, board of supervisor members could then determine if the road should be listed as a public right of way or if it should remain a toll road. Paragraph 4001 proved to be the foundation on which the railroad based their argument of invalidity. Within the clause it is stated the expectation of keeping a toll road in safe conditions and makes the operator liable for any damages

²⁵ “Another Set-To Between Grand Canyon Railroad and R.H. Cameron,” *Coconino Sun*, September 30, 1905, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.* *Coconino Sun*, September 30, 1905.

sustained. In addition, the clause also allows for a *Quo Warranto*, a legal summons to show truthful ownership of property.²⁷

The legal status of the trail, having changed hands from Pete Berry to Ralph Cameron, was murky but Hitchcock allowed for tolls to be extracted. The railroad next attempted to force a forfeiture of Cameron's dominance over the trail by having its lawyers make the case that the trail was unsafe. If the Company could prove the trail was dangerous, it might convince a regional court to finally side against Cameron.

Indeed, the trail was perilous. Woven amongst the layered deposits of limestone, shales, sandstone, and schist, four-legged creatures best navigated the canyon. When indigenous communities began occupying the area, the trail became a major access point into the canyon. The trail followed the path of least resistance falling off the rim in narrow breaks in the rocks. In the first years of rail-based tourism dudes riding mules raised in Kansas, then shipped by rail to the canyon, traversed grades as steep as 40 percent.

The trail stitched its way deeper into the canyon along a series of tight switchbacks before reaching the section known as "Jacob's Ladder." Here Cameron and his associates carved a series of steps into the cliff face. When descending, riders dismounted their mules so the animals could pick their way down unburdened by a rider's weight. On the way up, riders remained on their mounts or clung onto their mule's tail as it pulled them upward. As a presumed measure of safety, female riders were often placed nearer the guides at the column's heads and tail, with the men in the party often in

²⁷*The Revised Statutes of Arizona Territory* (Press of E.W. Stephens, 1901). 1008-1012.

the group's middle. The trail's ruggedness meant sidesaddles were impractical and women were expected to ride "with divided skirts."²⁸

As parties passed through Indian Garden's edenic lushness, the trail turned east, stepping up onto the Tonto Plateau's sweeping esplanade. Emerging from the basin's confines a panoramic view few can forget met riders while they traversed the undulating landscape for a quarter mile, before the trail took a nose dive into the inner gorge. Here the trail followed above the banks of a perennial stream whose dissecting waters sliced the Topeats Sandstone and Bright Angel Shale into a tight channel. Utilizing the natural path of least resistance, while staying well above the high-water line, the trail coursed further into the canyon. Riding deeper still, views of prominent land marks like Vishnu's Temple, Buddha, and Brahman became hidden behind sheer walls of burnt red granite spires rising hundreds of feet from the canyon floor. Here guides redirected their dude's attention to the cliff's base where stone and mud granaries sat precariously perched, built centuries before by the Ancestral Puebloans.

Twisting back unto itself in countless switchbacks, The Devil's Corkscrew, as it became known, descended nearly a thousand feet in less than a mile along a shelf of crumbling granite rubble which shot like pinballs from the hoofs of struggling mules. Like at Jacob's Ladder, parties dismounted while descending. In an avalanche of cobbles, dust, and flesh, parties were spat on to the banks of Pipe Creek, whose bending course ended at the Colorado River at two miles away.

²⁸ "Into Grand Canon," *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, June 1, 1915, 2. "Mules for Grand Canyon," *Jeffersonian Gazette*, June 30, 1909, 6. "Mules," *Spokane Press*, October 22, 1909, 5. A two-hundred-pound weight limit has long been standardized for participants.



*Figure 1: Rounding Cape Horn at the head of the Bright Angel Trail.
Courtesy of Kolb Collection.*



Figure 2: Dudes on Jacob's Ladder. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.



Figure 3: Dismounted riders follow behind their mules heading down the Devil's Corkscrew.
Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

Chapter Two: Tourism Developments 1903-1910

Located at the Bright Angel Toll Road's head, on a strip of the Bright Angel Trail's right-of-way within the Cape Horn Lode, Ellsworth and Emery Kolb, were building their future on contested ground owned by Ralph Cameron. The brothers arrived at the canyon two years before from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Ellsworth Kolb, the older of the two brothers, arrived at the rim in 1901 weeks after the train's arrival. He quickly saw a niche, yet untapped market for photographers to take pictures of tourists, particularly mule parties along the Bright Angel Toll Road. Within months of his arrival Ellsworth had written his brother Emery to join him. Smitten with the possibility of an adventurous western life away from the steel mills of Pittsburgh, a twenty-year-old Emery Kolb boarded a train to the Grand Canyon paid for by his future employer, the Hance Asbestos Mine. In mid-October 1902, Emery arrived in Williams, Arizona, where a spur line branched north to the Grand Canyon. Here Emery found a busy little town at the cusp of the high desert whose main export was lumber and where the saloons grew seedier the further from the station.¹

While waiting for his connection to the canyon, Emery Kolb entered photography studio to idle. Unbeknownst to him, the owners, a Mr. and Mrs. O. Arburgast, were soon planning to sell their studio and relocate back east. Recognizing a willing buyer, the Arburgasts offered Kolb the studio for \$425.00. Knowing an opportunity when it presented itself, Emery and Ellsworth bought the entire studio, from the camera

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Williams Coconino County Arizona. Sanborn Map Company, October 1901. Map. http://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00183_003/.

equipment to the boards and nails holding the place together with ambitions to photograph the Grand Canyon.²

By the spring of 1903, Ellsworth Kolb, had grown familiar with life on the rim. Between his time splitting wood and helping arriving guests carry their luggage at the Bright Angel Hotel, he developed a friendship with Ralph Cameron. Kolb approached Cameron with an idea. The brothers would move their studio from Williams to the front lawn at Cameron's hotel along the Canyon's rim. Cameron, having just returned from Washington D.C savoring his success in the opening salvos over the trail's control, granted a gentleman's agreement. The brothers did not permanently move to the Canyon until late October 1903. They brothers disassembled their Williams studio, put the salvaged lumber on a Santa Fe railcar, and sent it to the Grand Canyon where Cameron used the material to erect a new barn for his mule corral at the head of the Bright Angel Trail.³

Initially operating from a wall tent, by Halloween 1903, the brothers established their business near the head of the Bright Angel Toll Road, not far from Cameron's toll booth built eight months before which was also a temporary shelter. Both enterprise's need for a permanent structure soon became apparent and in April 1904 the Kolbs' began construction on a frame building to suit both necessities.⁴

² "Local News," *Williams News*, December 12, 1903, 3; "Local News," *Williams News*, December 27, 1903, 1. Studio Sold," *Williams News*, October 25, 1902, 3; "Local News," *Williams News*, December 12, 1903, 3.

³ "Studio Moves to Grand Canyon" *Williams News*, Williams AZ October 17, 1903, 3; "Local News," *Williams News*, December 12, 1903, 3; "Local News," *Williams News*, November 29, 1902, 1. Kolb Brothers First Tent Studio Below the Cameron Hotel, 1903, NAU.PH.568.5625, item # 123804, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff. AZ. "Cameron Wins Again," *Newton Daily Journal*, Newton, Kansas, 14 Feb 1903, 4.

⁴ "Grand Canyon Local Briefs," *Williams News*, April 30, 1904, 2.

From the toll house grew a studio. By November 1904, the Kolbs' completed a simple two and a half story clapboarded frame structure perched "at a dizzy height right on the edge of the precipice."⁵ Here, at the Bright Angel Trail's origin, before plunging into the canyon, Cameron had his toll house and the Kolbs had both a new home and a studio where they could expand their business. By positioning their building directly beneath the first feet on the trail's canyon side edge, a bottleneck was formed where a swinging gate kept unpaying customers from accessing the trail. In the future, the gate was simply a log slipped just high enough to impede a mule from crossing.⁶

For Cameron, each mule party photographed became a way to keep an account of both the business and of traveling parties. The Kolbs took images and sold prints to the tourists as keepsakes, proof of the rider's daring adventures on mule back into the Grand Canyon's wilds. Since their building was associated with Cameron efforts to extract tolls on mule riders, their business became embroiled in the trail's controversy. Beholden to Cameron's generosity in offering such prime real estate, the Kolbs decidedly chose to side with Cameron. If they wished to maintain a stake amongst the impermanent tourism enterprises at the Grand Canyon in the early twentieth century, no doubt that they had little choice.

Perched in the studio's western window, a wooden-framed camera roughly the size of a shoe-box faced the canyon. From its elevated vantage, the camera's lens looked down upon the first switch back of the Bright Angel Toll Road. Here, each morning,

⁵ "Grand Canyon Local Briefs," *Williams News*, November 12, 1904, 3.

⁶ Kolb Studio, 1904, 568.1197, item # 106328, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

a brother framed the arriving tourists, gallantly dressed in full three-piece suits, ankle length dresses, wide hats festooned with the latest exotic feather, and white gloved hands that clutched lurching saddle horns as the mules cascaded down the canyon face.⁷ Before the party could begin their harrowing descent the dudes past through the gate. While regrouping the brothers would snap the group's photographs before they dropped precipitously.

In 1904, photograph technology was not only expensive, but large and cumbersome. For that reason, many early tourists did not bring their own photographic equipment on their trips. Such an absence opened the Kolb Studio to thrive. As one of their early advertisements boasted "If you want something always appreciated, get a good photograph. Come now to avoid disappointment."⁸ The Kolbs were quickly learning a photograph's novelty, particularly from the Grand Canyon, was a coveted commodity within the ravenous tourism trade.

In October 1905 Emery Kolb married Blanche Bender. During the early winter of 1905 into 1906, after the daily spree of tourists descended into the canyon with their photos taken, the brothers built onto the simple two-story frame tollhouse. "hanging onto the rim of the Grand Canyon like a nail driven sideways into a cliff."⁹ The house now had a gabled roof, enclosing a rectangular floor plan. The building was anchored to the

⁷ Nettie Klinger, "Kolb Studio House Tour," Grand Canyon, Arizona, 13 March 2017; "Mule Party descending Jacob's Ladder, on the old Bright Angel Trail, Grand Canyon, NAU.PH.568.8790, item # 118663, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

⁸ "Local News," *Williams News*, November 29, 1902, 1.

⁹ "Ellsworth, Emery, and Blanche Kolb at the Kolb Studio, 1904, NAU.PH.568.2787, item # 110270, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ; "Kolb Brothers: Does of Dreams," *Williams News* Aug. 17, 1916, 5.

canyon by a railroad tie below and a cantilevered sign above gating off the trail to unpaying travelers. Shiplap boards sided the exterior, knots peppered the otherwise pale-yellow planks, and a window pierced each of the studio's four walls. In the western window rested the camera positioned to take mule party photos and from the north window offered a view unsurpassed by any other canyon residence.¹⁰ By integrating aspects of home into their business the Kolbs linked home and commerce; the business drove architectural decisions more than domesticity. Until then, the building served as, first and foremost, the toll booth, followed by a photographic studio, which included a dark room, a studio, and a sales room, and finally as a family dwelling. The rush to improve their living quarters became accelerated in 1906 when Blanche became pregnant. On June 9th, 1907, Blanche gave birth to the Kolbs' only child, Edith.

Running a photography studio on the Grand Canyon's rim in the first decade of the twentieth century had its difficulties. In their first years, the brothers operated their business with minimal resources. Their darkroom was a shallow mine shaft Ralph Cameron dug darkened by blanket draped over the shaft's entrance. They also lacked a consistent water supply.

Photography in the early 1900s required sizeable quantities of fresh water. First the images needed to be submerged in a water-based solution. After the soaking, the prints were rinsed in a flow of slow-moving fresh water. As the Kolb Brothers' business grew, so too did their demand for water and they faced a real issue for accessibility of enough of the resource.

¹⁰ *Historic Structures Report for Kolb Studio and Garage*. (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon National Park Research Library, 1984); "Grand Canyon Local Briefs," *Williams News*, November 12, 1904, 3.

One way, the expensive option, was to purchase water from the tankers that hauled the commodity in by rail each day. The cheap option was to collect precipitation, but the average rainfall at the Grand Canyon is less than thirteen inches. Two options took time and manpower. One could travel to Rowe Well, pump out enough murky water shared buy cows and deer that a cart pulled by mules could haul. Finally, you could hike the three and a half miles down to Garden Creek, three thousand feet below and carry water back.¹¹

The Santa Fe Rail Road refused to sell the Kolbs any water, hoping to choke the brothers' new business. In 1906, Ralph Cameron granted the duo permission to erect a processing facility on one of his claims at Indian Garden.¹² Here, along ever-flowing banks of Garden Creek, the brothers built an inner canyon dark room. The parcel of land on which the brothers' new building lay sat upon the Magician Lode, one of Cameron's network of unpatented claims. Lashing planks, boards, windows, and all other needed construction material to the backs of reluctant mules and burros, the brothers arduously made the trip up and down the trail hauling piece by piece what would become an auxiliary studio along the banks of Garden Creek. Though they now had an abundance of water, the pair became faced with the struggle to access the resource.¹³ After the completion of their inner canyon studio, or their "half-way house" as they called it, the

¹¹ Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 94-95.

¹² Michael Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon History Association), 2001. Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 25.

¹³ Ellsworth Kolb, "Through the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon" *National Geographic*, Vol XXVI August 1914, 126-128; William Suran, *The Brave Ones (Flagstaff: Fretwater Press 2003)*, 121.

brothers adopted a new business strategy that goes unparalleled in the history of tourism in the national parks.

Each morning, a new group of dudes gathered on the rim to prepare for their descent into the canyon. Tolls paid, the line of mounted riders walked passed the Kolb Studio, descended twenty yards and made a sharp switch back into the canyon. Now facing the Kolb Studio's western wall, the party stopped. From the prepositioned camera, the brothers snapped a photo of the intrepid tourists. Photos taken, the group then held up their fingers indicating how many prints each desired. Tallying the total, one of the brothers carefully wrapped the glass plate negatives, put them in a specially fitted backpack, and swiftly exited the studio.¹⁴ Navigating a steep side trail behind the studio, they scampered down the cascading limestone, down a log placed on cliff brake, picked their way along the Coconino Sandstone and popped out at small seep that nurtured a stand of hemlocks. Having bypassed the several switchbacks still being descended by the mule party, one of the brothers dashed down to their Indian Garden facility to process the daily ration of photos. Copied, processed, and dried, the photos were then rushed back the three thousand feet to the studio, where, with Blanche's help, the prints were mounted in brown cardboard frames and the date written on the lower right corner. On a good day the ritual, was completed in time for the dudes to pick up their photos by the day's end; however sometimes the brothers were unable to have the photos prepared in time. When the brothers failed to keep pace, they mailed the orders, or, to the irritation of the railroad

¹⁴ Michael Anderson, Polishing the Jewel, 14-15. Nettie Klinger, "Kolb Studio House Tour," Grand Canyon, Arizona, 13 March 2017.

company, met the travelers as their train departed.¹⁵ The practice was continued until 1931 when the Santa Fe Railway completed a pump station from Indian Garden's to the rim.¹⁶

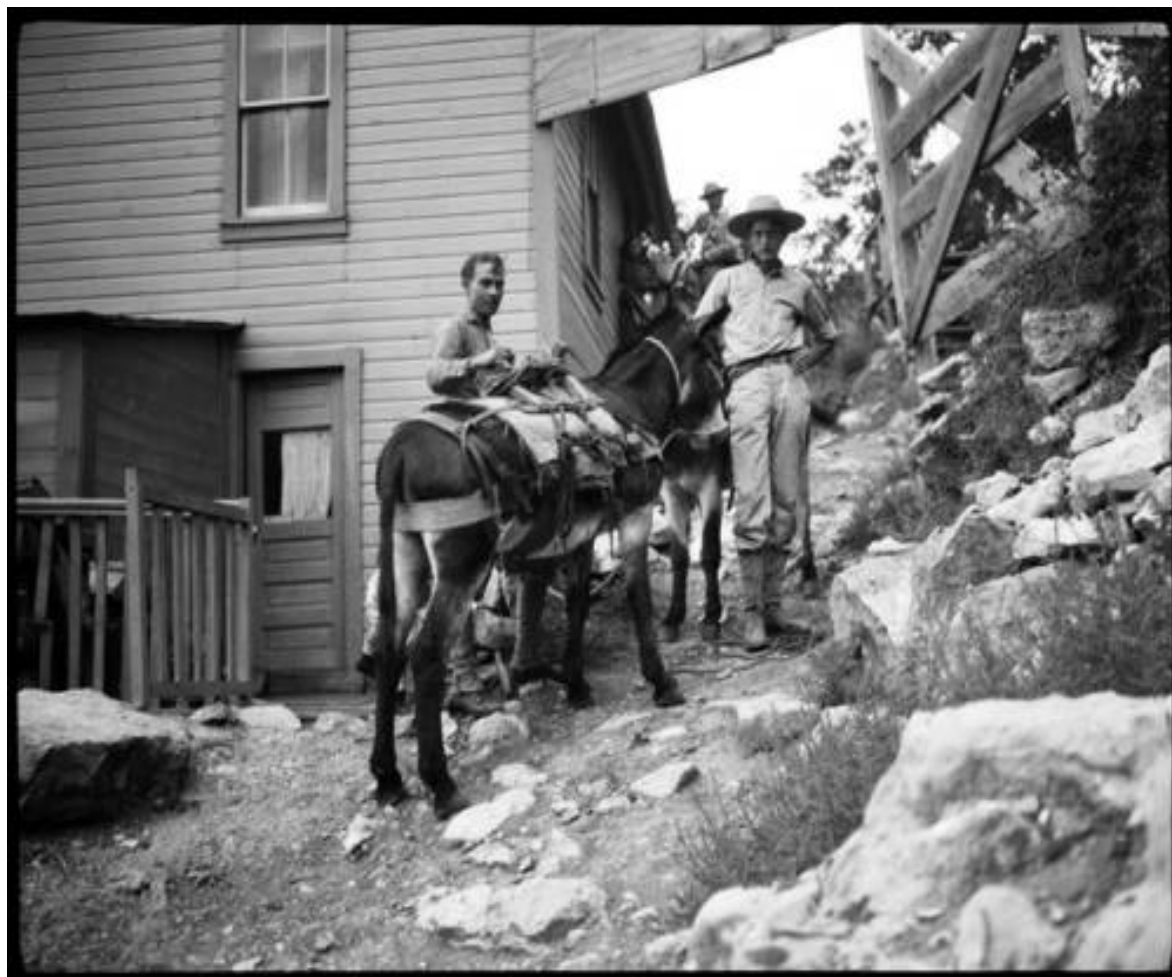


Figure 4: The canyon wall and the tollhouse-studio formed a bottleneck along the trail. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

¹⁵ Roger Naylor, *The Amazing Kolb Brothers of the Grand Canyon*, Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Natural History Association 2016, 20-24. This is certainly one of the favorite stories told about the Kolbs and often fraught with a high level of inaccuracies. The stories often portray the Kolbs making this trip for several decades and often exaggerating how many times a day the trip was taken, sometimes told having the Kolbs make as many as three or four trips in a day.

¹⁶ Emery Kolb to Ford Harvey 1915, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 396, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; Cultural Landscape Report, *Indian Gardens*, Grand Canyon National Park (Grand Canyon, AZ, June 2005,) 85.



Figure 5: Kolb Studio addition under construction, circa 1906. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.



Figure 6: The Kolb Brothers went to great lengths to collect water and make money off the mule-riding industry including packing building materials to construct their inner-canyon darkroom. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

In April 1904, under the guidance of architect Charles Whittlesey, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway began construction on El Tovar Hotel for its hospitality subcontractor Fred Harvey Company. Costing over \$250,000 and taking two years to complete it was the most expensive hotel in the company's fleet and by far the most spectacular. With state-of-the-art steam generated electricity, a greenhouse, world-class restaurant along with unmatched views from the front porch swings, the hotel gave visitors a top-class experience.¹⁷ Whittlesey's design for the interior of the El Tovar resembles a European hunting lodge, while its Shingle Style reflected the emerging Rustic style so associated with the national parks.

At the same time as the hotel's construction, the Company commissioned Mary Jane Colter to design the Hopi House. Located directly across the courtyard of the hotel, Colter's design was a modern rendition of a traditional Hopi pueblo. Funded by the Santa Fe, Hopi masons were commissioned to stack and shape the native rock into a three-story building with apartments on the upper floors to house the native craftspeople whose merchandise was sold on the ground-level. Colter's vision for the Hopi house was to be as traditional as possible with the building's aesthetics to showcase traditional Southwest Native American building styles and art. The ceilings are thatched branches laid across locally harvested trees used as vigas, broken pottery is strewn along the walls of the higher floors, and saddles sit in corners, the arid climate drying leather till it became

¹⁷ "El Tovar." *Grand Canyon National Park Lodges*, 13 Sept. 2017, www.grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging/el-tovar/. Fred Harvey Company, *El Tovar: A New Hotel at Grand Canyon of Arizona* (Detroit: Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Co., 1909), 9.

brittle. Colter had a vision for every aspect of her buildings, she was even known to smear soot on a mantel to give it a more authentic look.¹⁸ With the finest hotel, restaurant, and trinket shop, the railroad was quickly dominating the economy at the canyon. Remaining in their way of a complete monopoly were the mule riding and wagon riding businesses.

In 1907, after the completion of two enormous livestock barns two hundred yards southwest of the depot, the Company began to dominate the livery and mule guiding service. The barns, one meant for stalling mules, the other for sheltering carriages and their horses, were similar in style. Their lower sections were board and batten construction, with a shingle wainscoting detailing the wall's upper portions. Like a flu on a chimney, a cupola crowns each gambrel roof to help facilitate air movement, a key design feature to prevent the hay from spontaneous combustion. Flanking its heights in the middle are double door dormers meant for receiving hay into the loft from a spur rail line running parallel the two barns. The interior of each barn had over one hundred stalls, with rows on either wall and a double row in the middle. Hay shoots descend into every stall from the massive hay lofts above.¹⁹

The significance and reliance on horses and mules at the Grand Canyon cannot be overstated. Before railroads and automobiles, the sole means of transportation along and within the canyon was either on two feet or propelled by four hoofs. The genteel clientele had no interest in walking into the canyon. John Hance, Martin Buggeln, Sanford Rowe,

¹⁸ Virginia Gratten, *Mary Jane Colter: Builder on Red Earth* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon History Association, 2007).

¹⁹Gordon Chappell, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Grand Canyon Village Historic District," Coconino County, Arizona, listed on November 20, 1975.

and William Wallace Bass had already been guiding trips on horse and mule back for over a decade before the railroad decided to try its hand in the mule business, with the Fred Harvey Company as concessionaire.²⁰

Across from these barns are the blacksmith and saddle shops. Predating the two barns by a year, the shop's utilitarian significance in the early years of tourism development can be witnessed in its early construction. Every wheel was trued, and every equine used by the Fred Harvey Company was shod by the blacksmiths who pounded out steel over a coal fire. The blackened blacksmith shop rafters have earned that soot. The leather shop, an addition joining the southern wall of the building, produced the harnesses and saddles used by the Grand Canyon stock. Both shops are still used to date and many of the tools, including an enormous belt driven, ceiling mounted drill press are still occupying the shops.

Adjacent to the blacksmith and saddle shop was the wrangler bunk house, a long, two story, adobe building, whose white trimmed windows blend with the rustic western theme popular in Santa Fe Railway architecture. Positioning the equine industry and its workers on the other side of the tracks, far from the sophisticated El Tovar Hotel, reflected the turn of the century theme of American city planning using railroad tracks as a socioeconomic dividing line. It must also not be over looked, that having upwards of two hundred head of stock in such a contained area causes a tremendous amount of manure that when left to stagnate can become quite unpleasant to the olfactory senses.

²⁰ Anderson. *Living at the Edge*, 50- 55.

Furthermore, the barns and corrals sat above the Bright Angel Wash, a perineal creek bed, which before proper irrigation was installed, became inundated with fouled runoff from the stock pins during heavy rains.²¹

In 1909, the Santa Fe built a new depot immediately downhill of the El Tovar. Designed by Francis Wilson, the still in use depot is of a similar Rustic style architecture that compliments the El Tovar. Passing by the squalor conditions of worker housing on the village's forested western edge, the train came to a stop at the manicured grounds of the Fred Harvey domain. From the rail car's steps, as an arriving guest's eyes scanned upwards, they saw the rustic ornate depot whose gently sloped roof merged seamlessly with the El Tovar's limestone foundation. The depot's relocation, as was hoped, drew travelers further from Cameron's Hotel. With more distance between the crowds, Cameron's establishment became removed from the tourist hub, prompting his employees to hand out flyers enticing travelers to wonder "when you can get as good or better from a private citizen- are you going to patronize a greedy, grasping corporation?"²² Ralph Cameron's lodging operation could simply not compete, and the Santa Fe's efforts were fruitful. Within a year Cameron, who now devoted his time to congressional matters, closed his hotel, however he continued operating his own guiding service whose four-dollar rate for a guide and a mule undercut the Santa Fe's fee of five-dollars.²³ Furthermore, the toll road was still under his influence.

²¹ Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 31.

²² Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 7-10.

²³ "Into Grand Canon," *Lawrence Daily Journal-World*, June 1, 1915, 2; "Done by One Man." *The Topeka State Journal*, August 5, 1911, 6. Based on the recorded estimate of twenty riders paying the toll per day, between \$29,000 and \$36,500 was generated annually.

Cameron and the railroad were not the only ones interested in developing an inner canyon tourist retreat. Lacking a railroad and separated by twelve miles and over twelve thousand feet of elevation change, the canyon's north rim did not experience the same level of interest as did the South Rim during the dawn of tourism. Undeterred, Dee Wooley, a businessman from Kanab, Utah and David Rust, his son-in-law, a principal for the local school district, created the Grand Canyon Transportation Company. In 1905 they set forth constructing a trail from the north rim to the river along Bright Angel Canyon. Dropping deep into the canyon, the trail crisscrossed the Bright Angel Creek nearly one hundred times as it snaked its way towards the Colorado River. After toiling months of slow progress, the trail crew finally reached the water's edge.²⁴

The goal was to erect a cable tram system linking the canyon's two sides for the first time ever. Prior to the tram's completion, any person wishing to cross over to the canyon's north rim needed to swim or row themselves across in a boat, should the boat be present. To aid in ferrying stock across, specially designed sectional boats were brought down on mules, where they were assembled on the banks. After stripping their mounts of all tack, then collaring the animal's neck with a rudimentary floatation device, resistant horses and mules were pushed into the swift waters by the forceful encouragement of men standing behind them swinging switches. As one man held onto the lead rope, another man rowed the odd trio across the mighty river.²⁵ The waters of the Colorado River, which remained unregulated upstream until 1962 with the completion of Glen

²⁴ Fredrick Swanson, *David Rust: A Life in the Canyon* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 30-60.

²⁵ Ibid; Emery Kolb, "Grand Canyon [Kolb Collection], *Reel 10*," 568.10, # 153444, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

Canyon Dam, brought fierce flooding each spring as the snow laden mountains feeding the Colorado and Green River drainages melted their loads, sending their slurry of silty waters sluicing into the bowels of the canyon, taking with it any boats moored at the water's edge. Such events meant that the river was only safely crossable in the scorching summer heat after the snow melt had receded or in the winter when the snow clung to the high mountain ranges thousands of feet higher.

Seeing this disadvantage, the Grand Canyon Transportation Company set about a painstaking process of constructing a safer and more dependent year-round method to access the blossoming tourism industry. A steel cage, mounted on coasters and powered by a mechanized winch, was designed to haul a single mule and its rider or up to three individuals. The cage, which was packed down in pieces, then assembled on site, had a solid decked floor of thick lumber. Forcefully laboring as their pack animals died from poisoning, the men struggled to stretch the cable between the two canyon walls. With horror, the crew watched as the braided steel cable snapped under the test run's tension and was swept downstream, requiring the wire to be fished out from the current before completing the task. Restrung, the men, sanguine in their efforts, watched in despair as the steel cage, loaded with rocks to simulate a rider and mule, again trolleyed out above the water and again crashed into the chocolate colored water of the Colorado River. Finally, after weeks of tedious efforts, the cable car was finally occupied by the first tourists to bravely step onto the swaying contraption and feel the cog's s judder as they lumbered to pull the steel cage above the turbulent waters.

The cable crossing's success introduced a new era of tourism at the Grand Canyon. Once the tramway was in operation, Rust built an inner canyon camp along the

banks of Bright Angel Creek to compete with Cameron's camp at Indian Garden. The camp, tucked against the side canyon's north wall near the creek's confluence with the Colorado River, consisted of simple accommodations of canvas walls tents and an outdoor kitchen. Rust's most lasting contribution has been the two fig trees and the pomegranate tree which still bear fruit each season. ²⁶

For Ralph Cameron, the toll road was only part of his canyon empire. His strategy lay in his dozens of mining claims which accounted for an estimated 13,000 acres of canyon real estate. By claiming and not patenting, Cameron exploited a loophole in the mining laws that essentially allowed for these claims to be a long-term lease. By performing the bare minimum requirements to satisfy the laws, Cameron was able to control sizeable portions within the canyon tax free. Like updating a car's registration Cameron would later admit, "I developed certain prospective mines, some of which I sold, and others I held under the well-known practice of keeping up the necessary assessments, which did not require application for patent or perfection of titles." ²⁷

Cameron's claims, each one hundred and fifty yards long by thirty yards wide, traced their way along the trail, one connected to the next, twisting around switchbacks like a giant serpent. Nearly every foot of the trail was under some form of mineral occupancy claimed by Cameron, with many of his most important claims located in Indian Gardens. Here a natural freshwater spring emerged from the Red Wall Limestone

²⁶Swanson, *David Rust*, 30-60.

²⁷ Senator Ralph Cameron, Proceedings and Debates, 69th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, 1924 LXVII, pt. 2: 12971.

and begins making its way down to the Colorado River two thousand feet below. The fresh water, some of the only to be found in this part of the Grand Canyon, supported an oasis, described by one traveler as “perpetual summer.”²⁸ Like an empire establishing a colony, Cameron erected Cameron’s Camp, to accommodate travelers in the inner canyon splendor. To help shade the tourists from the scorching summer sun, Cameron had Cottonwood trees planted and vegetables were grown to feed hungry clients. Cameron’s Camp became a destination where intrepid tourists, not satisfied with the day ride, could basecamp then spend multiple days riding mules throughout the inner canyon.²⁹

In 1905, Cameron’s control over the Bright Angel Trail faced new allegations from the railroad company. The Company had questioned particular mining claims at Indian Garden including the Wizard, Willow and Magician claims, as well as the Alder Mill site. In the lawsuit *Grand Canyon Railroad Company Vs. Ralph H. Cameron*, the railroad argued that sufficient minerals were not present to justify a claim and should therefore be invalidated. Hiring Flagstaff mineralogist W.C. Bashford to assay the claims, the Santa Fe Railway hoped to prove that the minerals could not equate to the five hundred dollars needed to maintain a claim. When a second assay found, that the claims contained minimal but suitable amounts of ore, the Register and Receiver for the district proclaimed that the “protestants totally failed to prove the allegations set forth in the

²⁸ J. Donald Hughes, *In the House of Stone and Light*, Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1978), 82; “Grand Canyon Railway Nearing Completion,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 2, 1899, 15. “Fighting for the Trail: Ralph Cameron Wins Decision in Court for Bright Angel Trail,” *Weekly Journal- Miner*, February 11, 1903, 2.

²⁹ Douglas Strong, *Ralph H. Cameron and the Grand Canyon & The Man Who Owned the Grand Canyon* (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 1978,)18.

protest.”³⁰ The legal victory solidified Cameron’s position along the Bright Angel Trail. Furthermore, Cameron earned acclaim as the defender of the everyman against the mighty railroad conglomerate.

Cameron understood that the best way to maintain control over his little slice of commerce was to play by the law, or, rather, play within the law. Anticipating the trail’s scheduled forfeiture to the county upon the franchise’s five-year extension end date of January 31, 1906 and determined not to let the trail slip out of his hands, Cameron upped the ante for the pot of tourist dollars. In 1904 Cameron successfully won a bid for Coconino County’s Board of Supervisors and by the next year, he found himself chairman of the county board.

The county’s three commissioners, A.T Cornish, F.O Polson, and Ralph Henry Cameron, met on the last day of January 1906. Each earned an annual salary of \$83.33, untaxed, and each had their fingers throughout Coconino County’s economy. When they met, they tabled the Bright Angel Trail’s transfer from trail owner to the Country Board of Supervisors as the law demanded. A contract was quickly presented in which Cameron, citing paragraph 4004 from the revised Statutes of 1901, relinquished his ownership of the trail and all pertaining privileges to Coconino County.³¹ As chairman of Coconino County’s Board of Supervisors, Cameron faced two options, open the road for free access, where the county would be held legally responsible for upkeep and

³⁰ “Another Set-To Between Grand Canyon Railroad and R.H. Cameron” *Coconino Sun*, September 30, 1905, 7. It appears that Cameron was using his social influences to foster sympathetic tendencies throughout Northern Arizona to help secure his political agenda. As a county commissioner, Cameron pushed for the reimbursement of lost taxes by the railroad, lumber, and ranching organizations.

³¹ Coconino County Board of Supervisors “Take Charge of Bright Angel Trail” *Williams News*, February 3, 1906, 1.

maintenance, or continue using the trail as a toll road and subcontract the labor. The board, then pushed through a new deal by immediately going under contract with L.L. Ferrell for a five-year deal in which Ferrell maintained the trail and personally kept the tolls, “one dollar for each horse, mule, or other animal led, drove, rode, or otherwise passing over or upon said toll road.” Furthermore, the contract exempted Ferrell from any liability on the trail.³²

The contract, which A.T. Cornish opposed, reeked of cronyism. The lone dissenting commissioner pointed out that Cameron, who was soon to vacate his chairmanship, was set to directly benefit from county property. Cornish also sought due process by resisting the rapid decisions and lack of citizen input, but Polson and Cameron’s two-thirds majority silenced his voice.³³ The *Albuquerque Citizen* lamented that “it is an open secret that Ferrell was used simply as a blind to screen the fact that Cameron, as a supervisor is contracting with himself to divert tolls into his own pocket.”³⁴ The *Citizen* was not wrong. Ferrell was the manager at the Cameron Hotel. The hotel also served as the community’s post office, to which Ferrell and his wife, Louisa, Cameron’s younger sister, were the postmasters.³⁵

In March 1907, arguably the most shadowy event surrounding the trail transpired. Ralph Cameron had brought before the 24th Territorial Congress a bill meant to ensure the Bright Angel Trail as his property for another five years. The bill called for changing the territorial statutes to allow for the return of toll roads to their previous owners after

³² Ibid., *Williams News*, 5.

³³ Ibid., *Williams News*, 5.

³⁴ “Grand Canyon Toll Road Remains in Private Hands” *Albuquerque Citizen*, August 4, 1906, 3.

³⁵ Margaret Verkamp, *History of Grand Canyon National Park* (University of Arizona, Grand Canyon Pioneer Society, 1940), p. 29-36.

being acquired by the county in which it lay. Though worded in such a way as to imply toll roads were prevalent in the Arizona Territory in 1907, tax records collected from that year indicate only one toll road in the entire territory, the Bright Angel. Supporters of House Bill 77, regionally known as the “Cameron Bill,” openly admitted their support lay in Cameron’s long-standing efforts against the Santa Fe Railroad. The territorial delegates fiercely debated the legislation. When the bill finally passed in the House and went before Governor Joseph Kibbey, the governor vetoed the measure.³⁶

Two days prior to his veto, Kibbey had received a telegram from United States Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock advising the governor to veto any legislation regarding the Cameron Bill. The federally appointed Kibbey publicly proclaimed the telegram, which stated “It has been the policy of the administration to extinguish and refuse such pledges and public interest demands that I should call this matter to your attention” to be the basis for his decision to veto.³⁷ Reporting the events later to Washington, the governor had wished for further orders, but when none came, he stood by Hitchcock’s wishes, adding, “both houses promptly passed the bill over the veto, and before the vote was taken there was considerable discussion by the Democratic members of what they somewhat bitterly claimed was an unwarranted interference by Washington with local affairs.”³⁸

³⁶ Territories: Arizona, Toll Road Through Grand Canyon Forest Reserve: (Arizona Territory Governor Kibbey to United States Secretary of the Interior E.A. Hitchcock,) May 29, 1907. Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO. Arizona Territory Microfilm; W.C. Foster, *Annual Report of the Public Examiner, Phoenix, AZ., 1907*, 2. Arizona Territory Microfilm, Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College.

³⁷“Kibbey Veto’s Bright Angel Bill,” *Bisbee Review*, March 15, 1907, 8. Nearly every major territorial news outlet reported on the decision, with most printing Kibbey’s response directly.

³⁸ Territories: Arizona, Toll Road Through Grand Canyon Forest Reserve: (Arizona Territory Governor Kibbey to United States Secretary of the Interior E.A. Hitchcock, May 29, 1907). Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College.

In May 1907, news of the dispute reached a now retired, but still politically involved, Hitchcock, the same who three years previous had granted his hesitant blessings to the toll road's operation. An alarmed Hitchcock professed that he did not send the telegram, nor had any one from his office. Thus warned, Kibbey and Hitchcock began to track down the author, getting a signed affidavit from the telegraph officer on duty the day the message was received. They discovered, that the telegram did in fact originate in the capital, but some Washington official had sent the message impersonating the secretary. Tapping into the territory's provincialism, the conspirators had successfully swayed the waffling delegates to force a sweeping majority and the needed votes to override the governor's veto and pass the Cameron Bill.³⁹

Within a month, the Coconino County Board of Supervisors met with L.L. Ferrell to renegotiate Ferrell's contract to give the trail back to Cameron. Unsatisfied with the decision, the Santa Fe Railway took a new approach. The Company offered to collect the trail's toll and return to the county 70 percent of the profits.⁴⁰ When the county board, now consisting of members Gregg, Kennedy, and Cameron, rejected the railroad's offer in one motion and relinquished Ferrell of his contractual obligations in the next, the board was again the owners of the trail. Only for moments. Abstaining from his vote, Cameron

³⁹ Ibid. Arizona Territory Microfilm. The telegram sent to Kibbey is widely cited as the reason for the veto and its subsequent override. Until now, there has been no scholarly examination of how the override was manipulated. Recently uncovered internal memos and correspondences indicate Secretary Garfield opened an internal investigation into the telegram's origin. As public disclosure over the uncertainty would result in embarrassment for the administration, officials stayed tight-lipped and no media outlets reported on the intrigue. President Roosevelt did take a public stance on protecting the forest reserve from further development and desired stricter regulation. Efforts to include the Grand Canyon as a National Monument were already being discussed, however, it is likely that the Cameron Bill catalyzed the efforts.

⁴⁰ Coconino County Board of Supervisors, "Minutes from the Board of Supervisors," *Williams News* April 17, 1907, 2.

watched as Gregg and Kennedy voted “ayes” in their decision to give the right to collect tolls back to Ralph Cameron for another five-year extension, on the condition that he provide 10 percent of the tolls to the territorial school fund.⁴¹

The minutes read very clearly: the Santa Fe Railway regardless of any other disputes, was willing to provide to the county 70 percent of the toll road’s profits versus a mere 10 percent in the new extension for Cameron. “The franchise had been in existence for fifteen years and the revenues derived from the tolls collected thereon for the past three years have averaged twenty dollars per day.”⁴² The difference was staggering \$5,000 dollars added to the county’s coffers via the Santa Fe offer, as opposed to the approximately \$730 provided by Cameron’s 10 percent return. Commissioner Gregg defended his actions in an op-ed two days later in the *Coconino Sun*. He asserted the county could not dissolve the contract with Ferrell and enter into an agreement with the Santa Fe because Ferrell and the county were legally bound by a five-year contract. If the county had dissolved that contract, Ferrell could sue. Gregg went on to claim that “the railroad’s offer was made in cheap affect, and that no matter how large it might be it (the county) could not possible accept without Ferrell’s consent, which was refused.”⁴³ This admission further displayed the cronyisms that transpired in the smoky rooms of the

⁴¹ Ibid., Coconino County Board of Supervisors, *Williams News*, 2.

⁴² “Grand Canyon Toll Road Remains in Private Hands” *Albuquerque Citizen*, August 4, 1906, 3. Also, the railroad had already finagled themselves out of paying thousands of dollars a year in taxes in their land swap deal with the federal government six years before. This maneuver might have been a way for the county to be forced into being beholden to the railroad.

⁴³ Jesse Gregg “Bright Angel Trail: Chairman of Board of Supervisors Replies to Criticism, Tells Why Trail was Leased to Cameron,” *Coconino Sun*, May 2, 1907, 1; Senator Cramton, Proceedings and Debates, 68th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXV, pt. 4: 3489-3499.

Flagstaff court house. Later, when challenged in the Territorial Supreme Court, the Cameron Bill was affirmed as a legally binding.

Less than seven months after the Cameron Bill's passing, President Theodore Roosevelt, citing the Antiquities Act, established the Grand Canyon National Monument. With his executive wand, the president proclaimed the canyon closed so that no one could "fill up the hole or carry it away."⁴⁴ Fearful that mineral claimants would lose their titles to the land seizure, Roosevelt ensured that existing private lands would be excluded from the governmental domain. Included was the Cape Horn Lode, on which the Kolb Studio was located and the Bright Angel Trail began.

Cameron's struggle against the Santa Fe's attempts at terminating his federally protected right to tax mule riders was nearly a weekly discussion in regional newspapers. As a result, his plight, which he began manipulating as a yeoman's cause, was well known among the electorate. Entering the 1908 Congressional election cycle, a hopeful Cameron ran a platform which encouraged Arizona statehood, one of President Theodore Roosevelt's most important domestic issues. Five days after Cameron carried the territorial congressional delegate seat, an enthused President Roosevelt, wrote to Chief Justice Edward Kent from Washington D.C., "That is really good business. I am delighted that Cameron has been elected. I shall of course urge statehood for Arizona and New Mexico in my message."⁴⁵ Roosevelt, though leaving office the day Cameron

⁴⁴ "The Grand Canyon National Monument," *Arizona Republican*, February 8, 1908, 8; Douglas Brinkley *Wilderness Warrior: Teddy Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 751-755.

⁴⁵ "New Statesmen are Extremely Modest," *The Natchitoches Times*, April 30, 1909, 2; Theodore Roosevelt to Edward Kent, Washington D.C, November 9, 1908. Edward Kent would go on to rule in a landmark water rights case promoted by Cameron who was helping carry out Roosevelt's reclamation

arrived, nonetheless had his man on the ground ready to vote yes in the Arizona statehood debate.

Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, initiated the former president's long fought agenda of territorial statehood on June 20th, 1910, by signing the Enabling Act which initiated the formal process to establish Arizona and New Mexico as states. Ralph Cameron, who rose to prominence fighting for his right tax mule riders, now stood over the president's shoulder while Taft signed the bill Cameron crafted.

agenda. Though the evidence is too inconclusive at the time of publication to confirm, the available evidence suggests that Roosevelt may have been bolstering Cameron's political presence to achieve his presidential ambitions for both territorial statehood and water reclamation.

Chapter Three: Rim Side Developments 1911-1918

Unable to push Cameron aside legally, the Company decided to build its own competing trail eight miles east of the Bright Angel Trail to eliminate paying the tax, thus reducing Cameron's income. In 1911, the first picks and shovels sank into the limestone at the trailhead to the newly designed Hermits Trail. Coordinating with the United States Forest Service, the Company's goal was to have a free trail within the canyon that led to their own inner canyon resort camp.¹ Following the success of Cameron's Camp at Indian Gardens, the Fred Harvey Company frustratingly saw the attractiveness of such an inner canyon tourist retreat. However, if riding across a toll-free trail was its pure intentions, rather than construct an entirely new trail, the Company could have easily used the only other dude trail suitable, located thirteen miles the other direction, the Grandview Trail. However, Pete Berry, Cameron's long-time business associate maintained a hotel at the Grandview Trailhead.² The object of the Fred Harvey Company was to make their presence along the rim so absolute that tourists would only see its facilities.

The plan called for the Fred Harvey Company to move much of its riding stock eight miles down canyon to Louis Boucher's trail into Hermit Creek. Like the Bright Angel, the Dripping Springs Trail initially was a Native American trail into the canyon. Louis Boucher, a reclusive prospector, rerouted and expanded the trail. The Company hoped to monetize Boucher's mystique by renaming the trail "Hermit's." Boucher's trail dropped precipitously into the canyon following a path of loose rock barely navigable by

¹ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 31-35.

² Ralph Cameron to Pete Berry, June 22, 1909, Box 14966, Folder 179061, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections and Archives, Grand Canyon National Park.

livestock. Also like the Bright Angel Trail, a fresh water spring emerged from the same aquifer that bled from the Red Wall Limestone's base. Amongst the craggy landscape of Dripping Springs, the Fred Harvey Company set about further rerouting the trail into a state-of-the-art riding path consisting of wide shoulders and gentle grades. They also minimized animals slipping by installing corrugated cement surfaces to shed rain and melting snow.³ In 1913, The Company would further improve the trail along the Tonto Plateau between Hermit Creek and the Bright Angel Trail, and further across to Tip-off Point where the trail joined the path to Rust's Cable.

At last, the Santa Fe Railroad, after years of unsuccessful attempts to eliminate paying tolls had a free mule trail into the Grand Canyon. Tourists would now travel along the newly completed Hermit Road, built for and maintained by the Santa Fe to access their new trail and camp. Stepping into a horse drawn carriage pulled alongside the El Tovar's passenger loading porch, travelers were taken on a rumbling drive that traced eight miles along the rim, bending and skirting with the canyon's edge before terminating at Hermit's Point. Much to their annoyance, passengers found that at two sections the macadam surface abruptly transitioned into unfinished bare earth that in the winter was known to mire carriages. Congressman Ralph Cameron, aware of the Company's plans, had secured mineral claims while the road was being surveyed and forbid any road improvements upon his claims.⁴ Once arriving at the Hermit Trailhead the dudes mounted Fred Harvey mules and descended into the canyon along a trail that had been

³ Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan: 16; Anderson, *Living at the Edge*, 102.

⁴ Michael Anderson, National Register of Historic Places, *Bright Angel Trail*, Grand Canyon Historic District, Coconino County, Arizona, listed on June 30, 1992.

designed specifically to make mule travel easier. The new trail's design meant dudes were no longer required to dismount as they had been at Jacob's Ladder or the Devil's Corkscrew, nor were they forced to pay a toll.

Upon learning of the Company's plans, Ralph Cameron was able to stake lode claims to portions of the ground on which the retreat was planned. Furthermore, he acquired key stream crossings which prevented easy access to potable water. Once the Santa Fe began preparing its trail for construction, Cameron then utilized his rights within the law to file an injunction to stop the progress.⁵ When the Company tried to run a water pipe to their camp, Cameron again filed an injunction against the Santa Fe stopping construction. For years to come, each party descending into Hermit Camp packed a mule full of water and ice.⁶

While the Company and Cameron fought over the trails and access to the canyon, the Kolb brothers focused on story, and turned to the technology of motion pictures. In November 1911, accompanied by an arsenal of still and motion picture cameras, and outfitted by the latest camping gear from Abercrombie and Fitch, the brothers launched their specially designed boats at Green River, Wyoming for a 1,400-mile descent to Needles, California. Their journey, which kept them on the river over six weeks, became only the seventh expedition to navigate the formidable waters.⁷ They set up cameras for shots, broke down camp each night, and processed films in a portable darkroom. What resulted were the first motion picture films taken of navigating the river system by boat.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Johnston and Leopold. "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 20; Proceedings of the National Park Conference (Washington: Govt. Print Office) 1912, 333-335.

⁷ Ellsworth Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon History Association, 1911), 335 -341.

Within one year, as planned, both brothers were on the lecture circuit stumping their story and promoting their book on their experience. Traveling by train, Emery Kolb hit every major city between Chicago to New York, developing lifelong friendships with influential individuals who would play important roles in the brothers' future.⁸

Foremost among the new allies was Gilbert Grosnover, the editor of *National Geographic*. They met after Grosnover's father-in-law Alexander Graham Bell heard Emery's lecture in New York. Grosnover asked Kolb to give a private viewing for society members. Emery gave three additional standing-room-only lectures. At the time the magazine, who had over 300,000 subscribers, was looking for a uniquely American experience to promote in a nationalistic effort to explore the wonders of the United States. Grosnover immediately recognized the brothers' journey as fitting handsomely into his magazine's mold.⁹ After much time spent with drafting and editing, the August 1914 edition for the enormously influential magazine granted eighty-six pages to telling the brothers journey.

A year earlier, Ellsworth Kolb wrote a book on the brothers' experiences, *Through the Grand Canyon: From Wyoming to Mexico*. The book was a companion piece for the lectures a souvenir for those who attended. Including the words "Grand Canyon" in Ellsworth's title is itself noteworthy. The brothers floated through several significant canyon systems on their journey, but none have the eye-catching public allure of "The Grand Canyon." Ellsworth capitalized on the canyon's visual stimulation and

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gilbert Grosnover to Emery Kolb, Series 1, Box 3, Folder 269. Emery Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

popularity to entice audiences, while at the same time instantly associating the Kolb Brothers Studio with the popular concept of Grand Canyon tourism.

National Geographic was not the only publication to pick up their story. In 1913, *American Magazine* ran a lengthy three-part feature on the river trip. No longer bridled by lecture halls with maximum capacities, the duo now had their story distributed to a national audience, meaning they had created a long-term interest in their studio. Further compounding this irritation was the foreword in Ellsworth's book, written by lifelong friend of Teddy Roosevelt and author of *The Virginian*, Owen Wister. Together the three shared another relationship, all were published by McMillan Press. Wister, who hoped to alert the public to the brothers' plight against the Santa Fe Rail Road and Fred Harvey Company, asked audiences

But is the Santa Fe wise in its persecution of the Brothers Kolb? Of course, it has brought thousands where only could go before. And for the money and enterprise spent upon this, no one but a political mad-dog would deny the railroad's right to a generous return. But why try to swallow the whole canyon? Why, because the Brothers Kolb are independent, crush their little studio, stifle their little trade, push these genuine artists and lovers of nature away from the canyon that nobody has photographed nor can photograph so well.¹⁰

Ellsworth's book brought their struggle with the railroad company into national attention. Naturally, Wister's criticism infuriated the Company. Their response was to buy up copies of the *National Geographic* issue to reduce its circulation. In addition, the company refused to restock both the *American Magazine* and the *National Geographic* editions at their bookstore in the El Tovar.¹¹

¹⁰ Ellsworth L. Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1958), IX-X. "Repeat Rapids Pictures," *New York Times*, February 2, 1913.

¹¹ Emery Kolb to Owen Wister, date unknown, Series 1, Box 7. Folder 1895. Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

The Company further demanded that the brothers change the foreword. In response, Owen Wister wrote to the Company explaining that the brothers had not in fact pressured him to write this opinion, but rather he had personally experienced the Company's attempts at stymying the brothers. In a scenario that was experienced by other tourists, Wister explained that while visiting the canyon and staying at the El Tovar, he struggled to get a straight answer from the hotel's manager about the Kolbs and saw for himself the company's efforts to distract tourists from visiting the Kolb Studio.¹²

Between 1913 and 1914, just as public exposure to the Kolb Studio began to increase, the Company expanded its presence at the Grand Canyon with a series of homes and dormitories styled in the motif that has become known as National Park Rustic. At the same time, the Company was beginning to delve into the emerging interest automobile tourism market. The Company built a garage at the head of the only serviceable road into the village to stable their horseless carriages soon to replace the horse drawn carriage.¹³ All these new buildings were located within eye sight along the rail line.

During the expansion, the Company sought and was awarded the right to construction two new curio gift shops, The Lookout and Hermits Rest, with the Fred Harvey Company operating the concessions. The two buildings, whose designs were both associated with Mary Jane Colter, were located eight miles from one another. Built at the

¹² Ibid; Michael Pace, "Emery Kolb and the Fred Harvey Company," *The Journal of Arizona History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 1983):339-362.

¹³ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 21-24.

end of the road, where the path created an eyelet as it bent back into itself for the return trip, Hermits Rest's began welcoming carriages in 1914 as they deposited their passengers. Here, while waiting to mount their mules, trinkets and wares were available for purchase. The Lookout, later adding the "Studio" portion of its moniker, was built along the rim in the Grand Canyon Village located between the El Tovar Hotel and the head of the Bright Angel Trail where the Kolb Studio had stood for over a decade.

The canyon's rim overlooking the Bright Angel Basin forms a large parabola. The El Tovar, setback one hundred yards from the precipice, is located at the 4 o'clock position, the Kolb Studio at the 6 o'clock. Jutting into the canyon between the two vantages extends a small rock outcropping of Kaibab Limestone. Before 1914, a traveler sitting on the northern wing of the El Tovar's sweeping front porch, could cast their gaze along the rim, tracing the edge to the west and through the scrubby Pinion Pines and catch glimpses of the Kolb Studio.

Built less than one hundred yards from Kolb Studio, The Lookout, constructed from the same Kaibab Limestone on which it rests, cascaded down the rock peninsula. From the vantage point of a pedestrian ambling along the rim from the El Tovar towards the trailhead, The Lookout obscures the line of sight to the Kolb Studio. If it were not for the brightly colored blue window frames, the gift shop appeared to merge seamlessly with the surrounding terrain. Camouflage was the point. The Fred Harvey Company sought to obscure the Kolbs' enterprise by building a sleek new gift shop and creating the

appearance that the rim-side promenade ended before giving way to the Bright Angel Trail.¹⁴

The Lookout provided a place where tourists could mill about, purchase wares, and observe the canyon's far reaches through freely available high-powered telescopes. In fact, the telescope was the only thing free in The Lookout and was specifically advertised on the sandwich board located outside the attraction. For several years, the Kolb Brothers had advertised the free use of their own high-powered telescope, a bulky four-foot-long brass tube mounted on a wooden tripod. The telescope, one of the brothers many side features to draw amblers into their business, was until then, the only free telescope of its kind available for tourists. Now, the Fred Harvey Company was competing directly with the Kolbs.¹⁵

To further obscure Kolb Studio, the Company relocated its mule corral immediately in front of The Lookout.¹⁶ By shifting their corrals a hundred yards up canyon, the Santa Fe was in effect performing the same maneuver witnessed in 1909 when they relocated the train depot to the El Tovar's base. The new corral was simple but elegant. A dozen four-foot-high cobble stone pillars enclosed the holding pin. Using the same cobbles and at a height of two feet ran a knee wall spanning the space between each pillar. Linking the corral ran a single chain attached to the tops of each pillar. At no more

¹⁴Virginia Gratten, *Mary Jane Colter: Builder on Red Earth* (Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon History Association, 2007).

¹⁵*Kolb Studio circa 1912 with River Boat on Trial*, NAU.PH.568.1199, item # 106330, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ; Santa Fe Railway, *Santa Fe Magazine: Lookout* (Chicago: Santa Fe Railway), 1916, 47-48.

¹⁶ Photograph from Grand Canyon Collection showing split rail corral, Grand Canyon Photo Collection, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collections, Grand Canyon, AZ; Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 25.

than fifty feet in diameter, the space was not intended for the long-term storage of stock. Each morning, tourists gathered in the shadows of The Lookout and listened with awed anticipation as a guide pontificated what they may expect to experience when riding into the Bright Angel.

Mounting their mules, in what truthfully was a selection determined by the mule's abilities and the size of an individual, the dudes fell into line behind the wrangler as he spurred his mule out of the gate. Stepping out towards the initial plunge into the Bright Angel, the mules lumbered along the rim towards the Kolb Studio. As the dudes approached the trailhead, their line of sight across the Bright Angel Basin was obstructed by the Kolb Studio which had become adorned with their glories painted on the studio's roof and eastern wall.

As they passed by the studio before making the initial switch back, a riders' gaze, now at a heightened elevation on the mule's back, lifted to read the brothers' accolades in the canyon spelled out on the shingled roof. Their trailside billboard proclaimed the brothers to have seen the Grand Canyon "by boat and by burro" along with boasts about the business's services including photographs, prints, and of course, a high-powered telescope. The brothers clearly appreciated their prime location by seeking to make it as visible as possible. Which is why the brothers were skeptical about an alternate rim route at the Bright Angel Trailhead designed to skirt the unsightly Cameron Corrals piled high with manure and whose stock now only pulled carriages.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid, Johnson & Leopold; Photograph of Exterior of Kolb Studio, circa 1917, NAU.PH.568.2787, item 11721, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff. AZ.

The Kolbs met most trains by shouting promotions from a megaphone while they handed out business cards directing tourists to their trailside studio. The scene was obnoxious to some, including the Fred Harvey Company and the United States Forest Service, who by 1915 explicitly forbid the Kolbs from advertising with a megaphone.¹⁸ Again, the brothers saw this limitation as the Forest Service providing favorable sympathy to the railroad company.

Popularity of Kolb Studio mule party photographs and their international distribution can be directly linked to the significant rise in Grand Canyon tourism. The duo had for over a decade nourished their international prestige predicated on travelers dispersing Kolb Studio photographs back to their homes. The Santa Fe, to its end, had ceaselessly been attempting to minimize the Kolb Studio while simultaneously wanting to capitalize on the market the Kolbs created.

The Kolb Brothers found themselves in a position that forced them to respond to economic pressures. On one hand they never had had more success, on the other, a new Fred Harvey attraction was actively detracting from their potential revenue. The lecture circuit's sensational press, Ellsworth's runaway hit book, and their *American Magazine* and *National Geographic* issues exposed both Kolb Brothers and the Grand Canyon to the national spot light of millions of potential visitors who would want to stop by the Kolb Studio on their trip.¹⁹

¹⁸ Emery Kolb to Ford Harvey," Series 1, Box 2. Folder 396. Emery Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 25.

¹⁹ Ellsworth L. Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (New York: Macmillan Company) 1958. Repeat Rapids Pictures, *New York Times*, February 2, 1913, 75.

What the brothers needed was a place to screen their films. “Encouraged by the Forest Department to build a nice (separate) studio in keeping with the surroundings” the Kolbs looked to expand.²⁰ However, the Forest Service Rangers told the Kolb Brothers the department hoped to relocate the Kolb Studio beyond the Hopi House in an effort to limit and consolidate the private industry along the rim. Under suspicion that the Fred Harvey Company had influenced the Forest Reserve officials, the Kolbs were denied a permit to build an auxiliary theater. Though in reality, when Cameron had written the brothers a letter of support, he stated the Kolb Brothers were from “Los Angeles” a slip that caused the brothers’ permit to be denied. Reaching out, Ellsworth sent Cameron a letter in the early winter of 1914 requesting permission to enclose the northern and eastern flanks of the studio, after all, the building was on his land. Cameron, who was more than pleased to oblige, so long as “you have not in any way connected yourself with the Forest Service”²¹ It is possible that Cameron intentionally misled the Forest Service officials in hopes the Kolbs would then look to him. Having a more permanent and public building upon the contested land benefited Cameron’s efforts to prove he had a valid claim, an issue still undecided by 1915.

²⁰Emery Kolb to Hon. J. Arthur Eliston, May 14, 1917, Series 1, Box 4, Folder 492, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

²¹ Emery Kolb to Hon. J. Arthur Eliston, May 14, 1917, Series 1, Box 4, Folder 492, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; Assistant Head Forester E.A Shauney to Emery Kolb, May 11, 1917, Series 1 Box 4 Folder 494, Emery Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University. Ralph Cameron to Ellsworth Kolb, December 7, 1914, Box 2 Folder 1701, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; Johnston and Leopold, “Grand Canyon Working Plan,” 14.

The brothers used the profits from their lecture tour and publications to have a modest auditorium built for the film's viewings and its associated lectures to the daily rotation of tourists arriving by rail. The contractor F.A. Boulin reshaped the home and studio from a stacked two and a half frame building with small shed additions, to one that included more substantial additions off the eastern and northern face.²² After the auditorium was complete, the brothers gave their lecture twice a day.

The theater addition became the threshold that took the Kolb studio from photography and curio shop to a must-see experience. Being silent, while Ellsworth bounced across the screen, trundling through rapids, Emery, who had honed his oratory prowess on the lecture circuit over the past two years, excited audiences by reciting a carefully choreograph script from a pulpit. The theater, which could hold roughly thirty people, was frequently at capacity for morning and matinee crowds of awestruck tourists. At 50 cents a head, the brothers now enjoyed a guaranteed revenue stream along with the sales from the daily mule party photos, landscape portraits, and curios.²³ Their success had the desired results. Now, instead of the Kolbs visiting cities, travelers came to them to hear about their journey.

After their triumphant river journey, the brothers decided the best way to draw visitors to hear their saga was to install Ellsworth's boat, *The Defiance*, in front of the studio. The boat, like a hook cast into a stream, was meant to grab the attention of strolling tourists. *The Defiance* sat awkwardly out of place along the Bright Angel Trail

²² "Kolb Studio Improvements," *Williams News*, March 4, 1915, 1.

²³ Lecture Script for Kolb Film, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 513, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

luring tourists inside. What was a boat doing perched on the trail? If their curiosity became peaked enough to stop, amblers were told by a sign mounted on the craft's gunwale about the boat's significance, then invited inside to witness for themselves the most spectacular adventure film yet recorded. Interestingly, within two years of the brothers displaying their craft, an apparent replica of Powell's Whitehall craft had likewise been relocated in front of The Lookout, angled in such a way that it casually guided pedestrians into the front door.

The Kolbs competed with the Company but also relied on its assistance. Consider the issue of water. The aridity of Northern Arizona precipitated the need for long term water storage. Just prior to their 1915 addition, the Kolb family installed a large wooden water tank slightly beneath the Bright Angel Trail. The cistern, which was fed from the roof by a series of gutters and downspouts, could not depend on the rain to fill its cavity.²⁴ To properly function, much like a boat, barrels require persistent moisture for the wood to swell in order to be water-tight. In the summer, aside from the inconvenience of not having drinking water, the cistern required a constant reservoir to keep from drying out in the Arizona sun, shrink, and then pop a leak. In the winter, the tank was allowed to run dry to prevent fracturing from expanding ice. The constant need for water and the undependable local precipitation forced the Kolbs to look to the Santa Fe to supply the family and business with water as their needs more than doubled.²⁵

²⁴ Photograph of Exterior of Kolb Studio, circa 1917, NAU.PH.568.2787, item 11721, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff. AZ.

²⁵ Ibid. Edith Kolb to Parents, December 14th, 1920, Series 1, Box 5, Folder 568, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

In a 1915 letter to Ford Harvey, president of the Fred Harvey Company, Emery pleaded to “bury the hatchet.” Kolb said he would comply with the restaurateur’s wishes for Owen Wister to remove a certain critical paragraph in his foreword, as well as the brothers would no longer solicit business at the depot. Kolb reminded Harvey that the brothers had drummed up a tremendous amount of tourist dollars that the Harvey Company benefitted from as well. Kolb then asks Harvey “You then will surely recognize what an asset our beautiful new building is in addition our attraction of the lecture and motion pictures . . . ‘tward bringing people over your road to stop at your hotels.”²⁶

As the Kolbs attempted to make peace with the Fred Harvey Company, they also needed to mend fences with the United States Forest Service. In May 1917, Head Forester E.A. Shareney informed the Kolbs about the inevitable transfer of authority from the Forest Service to the National Park Service. He urged the imprudence of the Kolbs’ to continue adding to their studio as the federal agency would undoubtedly require them to relocate the studio. Rightfully deflecting responsibility, the ranger informed the Kolbs that they must wait out for a response from the new custodians, the National Park Service.

By 1917 plans to establish the Grand Canyon as a National Park were on its way to reality. With its growing public interest, canyon tourism had exceeded the Forest Service’s capabilities to maintain order. Drafted by the overwhelmed Forest Service officials, the “Grand Canyon Working Plan” admitted to its limited regulatory

²⁶ Letter from Emery Kolb to Ford Harvey, July 21, 1915, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 396, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

authority to enact policy. Anticipating managerial transfer to the Park Service, the plan was meant as a guide book for what park officials could expect and offered suggestions on how to bring the hodge-podge of enterprises into a more cohesive organization, including calls for establishing zoning permitting and aesthetic standards. Coauthored by Aldo Leopold who would go on to become one of the environmental movement's most vocal proselytizers, the plan states that at the time of the document's creation only three livery outfits remained at the South Rim, the Cameron Brothers' corral located at the Bright Angel trailhead and the liveries of Bill Bass and Fred Harvey. Bass had ceased offering trail trips in 1913 and, like the Camerons, now only offered rim rides in carriages.²⁷

With no other competition, the Company gained dominance over the inner canyon mule rides and utilized over two hundred head of stock within its operation. The Working Plan sought to establish equestrian standards, including that a guide must be present for parties descending into the Canyon and parties could "not be more than ten persons or more than five women or children"²⁸ Early photos document as many as twenty-five individuals in a single riding party. For the guides, wrangling group sizes so large must have been a frightful experience. The need for livery regulations cited fluctuating rates and drifting schedules, but most importantly the need for safety standards made possible only in smaller groups. Interestingly, not until 1916, were there efforts to convey

²⁷ Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 13. The document admits that the nature of private property ownership on mining claims eliminates the Forest Service from enacting their desired standards. The Santa Fe Rail Road and the Fred Harvey Company appeared more than willing to conform to the proposed new standards, since their buildings, mules, and guides were the model from which the plan emerged.

²⁸ Ibid.

stringent economic restrictions on livery operations. The late date displays a dependence on equine was so ubiquitous its use was difficult to regulate. Additionally, throughout the summer of 1915, the Panama-Pacific World's Fair hosted in San Francisco brought thousands of travelers across the Santa Fe's rails. The heavily advertised exposition encouraged rail travelers to take the day long detour to the Grand Canyon, causing a significant spike in canyon attendance. The trail's notoriety as a thrilling attraction had long been publicized and demand soon caused the Forest Service to permit several temporary livery operations. The Forest Service's permitting of unvetted operations undoubtedly resulted in unsavory conditions and poor treatment of animals.²⁹ To further establish safety standards, the plan called for creating regulations asserting that riding a mule not first trail-broke by a guide to be a citable offense.³⁰

During World War One, the Kolb brothers left their canyon residence to do their part in the war effort. Emery joined the Signal Corps and while he was away corresponded with then Assistant Secretary of the Interior Steven Mather on the fate of his studio and home. Mather assured Emery that while he was serving his country, "no action would be taken by us that will in anyway interfere with the exercise of your privileges in the Grand Canyon."³¹ Though no action would be taken during the war, the Working Plan's call for the Kolb Studio's eventual removal based on its

²⁹ Proceedings of the National Park Conference (Washington: Govt. Print Office) 1912, 334-335.

³⁰ Johnston and Leopold, "Grand Canyon Working Plan," 16. Group sizes are still at a ten-dude capacity. Include the two guides with every group and the entire party is twelve humans on twelve mules.

³¹ Assistant Forester Shareney to Emery Kolb, May 11, 1917, Series 1, Box 4, Folder 494, Kolb Collection Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; Steven Mather to Emery Kolb, August 29, 1918, Series, Box 1, Folder 514, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

unsightly and out of place existence beneath the rim became a sentiment adopted by the National Park Service. Steven Mather later recalled a distaste for the Kolb Studio's location when denying a permit for a proposed building along the rim of Crater Lake National Park.³²



Figure 7: Kolb Studio Addition, circa 1915 Note the boat in foreground and advertisements painted on the studio's roof in the background. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

³² Linda Flint McClelland. *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 2001, 153-154.

Chapter Four: Impact of the National Park Service

On February 26th, 1919 Congress passed bills to establish both Acadia National Park in Maine and Grand Canyon National Park. The canyon's protection, first championed by President Benjamin Harrison, then echoed by President Teddy Roosevelt who bolstered canyon security first as a Game Preserve, then in 1908 he used executive powers granted through the Antiquities Act to designate the Grand Canyon a National Monument. Finally, the natural wonder was a National Park. Carrying more legal clout, the National Park Service set about implementing and adjusting the 1916 Grand Canyon Working Plan. However, try as it might, the agency had no legal standing for acquiring the Bright Angel Trail or the Kolb Studio.

Immediately upon acquiring administrative control, the National Park Service began consolidating tourism to radiate from within the Bright Angel Basin. Whether or not mule riders had to pay a toll was negligible to conservation efforts designed to contain park visitors in an effort to minimize environmental impacts on the canyon's fragile ecosystem. While the early Grand Canyon National Park framers were conservationists, they were also realistic in recognizing such high concentrations require certain amenities. The Santa Fe had long been supplying both water and electricity to canyon residents but now it was the government's turn to invest in canyon infrastructure.

Within a year of the park's establishment, the National Park Service set about designing a bridge to connect the tourism bleeding off the Bright Angel Trail with the unmatched beauty offered by excursions to the north rim. Replacing the David Rust's aging tram system that operated from 1908 till 1917 became a top priority Kaibab Bridge, or "Mule Bridge," was completed in 1921 making accessible for the first time ever a

reliable link across the Colorado River, something not found between Needles, California and Moab, Utah. The swinging suspension bridge was made of steel cables stretched across the river, then decked with wooden planks that had been lashed two to a side on strings of pack mules before being led into the canyon.¹ Wire fencing roughly six feet high enclosed the bridge to safely keep riders from potentially being bucked into the river sixty feet below.

Each trip pack trip into the canyon Grand Canyon is dangerous and not all are successful. While most mules used in modern strings are well broke to the conditions, occasionally issues arise. A misstep can send a mule stumbling or stepping over its lead rope causing the entire string to spook. Before contemporary mule teams leave the barn, each mule is tied from a lead rope on the animal's halter to a string called a "popper" attached to the mule in front's packsaddle. When heavily weighted, the "popper" breaks away from the lead rope allowing animals to separate before dragging other mules into whatever unfortunate situation caused the first to animal to spook.

In January 1921, packer Homer Arn led a string of eleven National Park Service animals on the routine resupply run down the Bright Angel Trail to crews erecting the Kaibab Bridge. The animals, loaded with dynamite, provisions and other supplies skated along the snow-covered trail as the early morning light of a new year cast the first rays of warmth across the canyon. Hidden within the shadows of the trailhead's alcove, the animals dropped into the canyon as bits of ice flung skyward with the lift of each hoof. Struggling to navigate the steep, icy incline, an animal green to the trail balked, stumbled

¹ Construction of Kaibab Suspension Bridge, NAU.PH.90.1745, # 836, Jack Greening Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; "News From Grand Canyon National Park," *Williams News*, February 17, 1922, 4.

off the trail and brought two more animals with it. As the mules tumbled hundreds of feet, their packs scattered their contents down the canyon's rocky escarpments. Though the explosives remained undetonated, Fred Harvey mule trips were canceled that day. The cancelation was not caused from safety concerns after the accident, but rather because their mules refused to pass by the dead animals lying in the trail.²

Spanning over four hundred feet when finally completed and to prevent overloading, riders were limited to one at a time while crossing the bridge. Though, once completed, Edith Kolb, Emery and Blanche's daughter, would be the first person to traverse the new bridge, boldly guiding her mule across the swaying span. During the high winds that rip through the inner gorge, the bridge was known to flip end over end, twisting itself into a mess that required the Fred Harvey wranglers to flip it back to normal. In 1922, Acting Superintendent John White penned an op-ed claiming "within a year or so the mule trip from rim to rim will become the greatest scenic journey of the United States."³ With the completion of Phantom Ranch, White's prophecy proved true and the mule industry at the Grand Canyon intensified.

The bridge's completion opened the opportunity for further development in the inner canyon, development Ralph Cameron, who was elected to the senate in 1920, opposed. Beginning in 1922, The Fred Harvey Company again gave Mary Jane Colter an

² Harris Abernathy "Personal experience of the author," Spring 2017, South Kaibab Trail, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon, AZ. "Three Pack Horses Plunge Over Wall on Canyon Trail," *Coconino Sun*, Flagstaff, Arizona, 28. Jan.1921; John Dickinson Sherman, "Suspension Bridge in the Grand Canyon," *Fulton County Tribune*, 23 June 1921. Eleven pack animals in one string is considered a large string by any standard. Modern strings are no more than five mules per wrangler.

³ "News From Grand Canyon National Park" *Williams News*, February 17, 1922, 4; Anderson, *Living at the Edge: Explorers, Exploiters, and Settlers of the Grand Canyon Region*, 104. Prior to the cable crossing, humans swam or rowed across and stock was forced to swim. Rudimentary floating devices were used to help keep an animal's head above water. The Rust's Cable improved river crossings, however the cart was not always on the desired side.

open canvas, this time, to create a back-country oasis for mule parties. Colter had already displayed her keen eye for the romantic western flare that has become such an alluring part of Grand Canyon National Park that without it, many modern tourists would only then notice the Canyon. By the time she began working on the plans for Phantom Ranch she had already designed the Hopi House, Hermits Rest, and The Lookout Studio. Later, in the early 1930's she would design the Desert View Watch Tower and the Bright Angel Lodge.⁴

The Phantom Ranch of Mary Jane Colter's environment was a magnificently intrusive way of using the natural landscape to construct the cabins and buildings. The Fred Harvey Company spared no expense for their new flagship resort. From here, Phantom Ranch was able to begin its initial roots with meals prepared by German immigrant Ida Hafemeister, the Ranch's first cook.⁵

After crossing the swaying bridge, one at a time, riders would regroup on the north bank and continue along the trail cut in the Vishnu schist that David Rust and his men spent toiling weeks blasting and chipping away. Traversing along the banks of the Bright Angel Creek, passing the alfalfa fields and the fruit orchards, past the chicken coops, and corral, the riders entered the inner canyon resort a quarter mile from the river. Phantom Ranch, now as it has always been, is resupplied by pack trains. In order to alleviate the constant need for resupplying, the ranch was as self-sufficient as possible in the initial years.

⁴ Gratten, *Mary Jane Colter*, 36-39v.

⁵ Ibid.

The Ranch could accommodate up to twenty dudes in a series of stone and wooden cabins. Depending on the cabin, their rafters are between sixteen to eighteen feet long. To accommodate the cabin's designs, while also taking into consideration the maximum length a mule can carry, rafter sets are comprised of individual timbers eight to nine feet in length that were then spliced together to achieve the desired length. Plywood sheets used for walling material measuring four feet by four feet were brought down lashed onto the sides of mules. In fact, there is not an original piece of lumber at Phantom Ranch longer than nine feet. The initial round of construction, beginning in 1921, relied heavily on the best available natural resource to build with, stone. Built without electricity, Phantom Ranch's cabins utilized Dutch doors and bays of windows for ample natural lighting. In the evening, the wicks of oil lamps fueled by kerosene imported by pack trains were lit in their specially designed stone alcoves. Later, in 1926, additional cabins were included to the ranch. These additions are distinguished by the reduction of stone and the increase in wooden building materials. The 1926 plans called for stone piers, infilled with framed walls rather than solid stone structures as seen in the Canteen and wash house.⁶

No matter how readily available rocks may be in the Grand Canyon, erecting structures using lumber and nails remained easier, even if that meant countless mule hours spent packing in thousands of board feet. Phantom Ranch predates the construction efforts made later by the Civilian Conservation Corps, who like wise were confined to a mule's carrying limitations. Existing for nearly a decade before the National Park Service

⁶ "Architectural Survey of Phantom Ranch", Harris Abernathy, Phantom Ranch, AZ. February 23, 2019.

began building their present inner canyon infrastructure, the agency sought to blend cohesively by emulating stylistic components similar to Phantom's.⁷ These included a mule corral and barn, two bunk houses, and similar facilities at Indian Gardens.

Like the mule corral in front of The Lookout, Phantom's loading corral consisted of stone pillars linked with a knee wall. A flattop stone sits prominently in the corral's center, its top polished from scores of rider's boots slowly wearing it down as they stand, balancing gingerly before mounting their mule.



Figure 8: "Packing lumber to build Phantom Ranch." Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

⁷ National Park Service, *Cultural Landscape Inventory: Cross Canyon Corridor Historic District*. Grand Canyon National Park: National Park Service, 2005.

In 1921 the National Park Service erected several buildings in the Grand Canyon Village, including an administrative building and several domestic quarters for rangers. In May 1921, Emery Kolb returned to the river, this time as head guide for an expedition for the United States Geological Society's surveying potential dam sites on the Green and Colorado Rivers. Kolb used his guide earnings to fund the next addition onto the studio.⁸ In the late fall through the early winter of 1921, the Kolbs hired local carpenters and fellow Elks Lodge members Walter Stevenson and Paul Keller to build, what the *Williams News* reported as a "five story, one story"⁹ That description meant that the carpenters built four lower stories so that the final story would merge at the roof. The top portion of the addition became an expanded auditorium, the lower floors became domestic spaces¹⁰

The 1921 addition is the first appearance of "National Park Rustic" or "Parkitecture" a sub-genre of the Arts and Crafts style, on the studio's exterior. The use of shingles and faux-log exterior siding indicated a shift in the studio's aesthetics from an incongruent appearance to one adhering to the developing style found throughout the

⁸ Linda Flint McClelland. *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 2001; Construction Stipulation Requirements, 1925, Box 12, Folder 182, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University; *Kolb Studio Historic Structures Report* (Grand Canyon, AZ: GCNPR, 1984). The commonly assumed date lines of additions made at the Kolb Studio as stated in the historic structures report asserts the structure was first significantly enlarged circa 1924. However, newspaper accounts from the era prove otherwise, as do the rash of related construction projects happening throughout the park

⁹ "Work Done at Kolb Studio" *The Coconino Sun*, November 18, 1921, 12.

¹⁰ "Kolb Studio House Tour", Nettie Klinger, Grand Canyon, AZ, 21 Feb. 2019; Construction Stipulation Requirements, 1925, Box 197 Series 12 Folder 182, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

national park system. The addition and its stylistic components exemplified blending more uniformly with the existing buildings and those under construction at the Grand Canyon National Park. The Kolbs hoped that such style changes meant that the National Park Service would not consider the studio to be an eyesore.

Capping the otherwise flat eastern roof sat a square turret from which a flag pole flown the American flag, visible from multiple spots along the rim and far below along the Bright Angel Trail. Three full length trees, stripped of bark and branches, were installed on the north face as support columns for the bay window extension that sat above domestic space.¹¹ Beneath the studio's gift shop, the domestic quarters of the family were also enlarged to include a kitchen, living room, three bedrooms and dining room.

Only four years later, architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood reinvented the Kolb Studio¹² The notable architect had been promoting the Parkitecture style design in several National Park lodges including Yosemite, Yellowstone, Zion, and Bryce Canyon as well as numerous railroad commissions. Parkitecture can be observed in notable stylistic components including use of peeled logs, local stone, earth-tone paints, and subdued roof lines. Underwood and his friend, National Park architect Daniel Hull greatly influenced style's pervasiveness. In turn, Hull's design of the 1924 Grand Canyon City Plan was heavily influenced by Olmsteadian opinions on landscape architecture. Author Ethan Carr in his work *Wilderness by Design: Landscape*

¹¹ Photo of Incomplete Studio Addition, 1921 NAU.PH.568.2787, item 11244, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

¹² Gilbert Stanley Underwood, "Studio Building for Kolb Bros at Grand Canyon," Arizona, item 636, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canon, AZ.

Architecture and the National Park Service notes that Parkitecture was a way to visually convey the uniformity for the new public land administration. Carr continues stating that from 1920 to 1933, drastic measures to create an appearance of collective management was undertaken at the Grand Canyon.¹³

In a letter dated January 27th, 1925, Louis Johnson, a confidant of Emery Kolb encouraged the photographer “when the landscape architect from Washington comes, put on your Sunday best, your Sunday smile, and with it your thinking cap. For if he wishes, he can help you.”¹⁴ Presumably Johnson is referring to Hull or Underwood. Johnson’s sage advice appeared to have worked, for the Kolbs were allowed to expand their studio, though strict architectural guidelines were required to blend with the existing built landscape. A specification list supplied by the National Park Service states “outside construction to conform to the elevation plans supplied by the Park Service as nearly as possible.”¹⁵ Among other details, these plans, drawn by Underwood, called for brackets beneath the “telescope room,” or, if preferred, columns made of bark-stripped pine posts. Within Underwood’s sketches can be observed consideration for the Kolb family’s personal preferences, while at the same time limiting their options through the selection of only two choices. The second wave of National Park Service construction projects throughout the Grand Canyon Village correlates with the latest alterations made

¹³ Ibid. Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), Chap 3.

¹⁴ Louis Johnson to Emery Kolb, January 25, 2915, Series 1, Box 5. Folder, 742, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University.

¹⁵ Construction Stipulation Requirements, 1925, Series 1, Box 4, 494, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University. Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Studio Building for Kolb Bros at Grand Canyon, Arizona, item 636, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canon, AZ

on the Kolb Studio and Underwood designed within the wishes of the emerging and congruent architectural style.

In preparation for leveling off a grade, dynamite was used to flattening off a section large enough to accommodate the new foundation. Using two-inch-wide drill bits, the National Park Service bored into the Kaibab Limestone, then expertly fractured the rock with explosives forceful enough to splinter the hardened limestone, yet weak enough to not send chunks of rock raining uncontrollably into the canyon and onto the studio. Roughly three feet separate the bore holes which all plunge to a uniform depth for the desired grade suitable for the installation of windows on the middle two floors. Again, shucking the hard work, the Kolbs hired Walapi men to erect a set of terraced buttresses beneath the studio extending into the canyon. Erected from the dislodged stone, the tiered platforms stepped its way far below the poured concrete and rock foundation. Reaffirming the notion that the Kolb Brothers are the builders of their own home is simply not true. While it is likely that they aided in contributing to aspects of construction, their abilities paled to the level of technical knowledge required to make such drastic improvements, these were left to the professionals of E.E. Eck General Contractors.¹⁶

¹⁶ Contractor Receipt from 1927, Series 8. Box 6. Item 866 Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Oral Interview of Emery Kolb, 1976, Series 8. Box 5, Item 233, Kolb Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University. Kolb states in an oral interview that he had the National Park Service do the work. Exploding rock foundations with dynamite is a safety hazard to start, include the populated location, the physical proximity of the studio, and the detonations clearly required professional standards. Not to mention, the Park Service would not have allowed just anyone blasting dynamite.

Encasing the entire structure, a shallow pitched roof was installed over the two pair of dormers, the turret, and other angles of the roof, which appeared out of place within the landscape. The studio was also painted the same dark brown found on other prominent village buildings, though beige trim outlined the Kolbs' windows. Broken into three sections, the roofline steps downward following the Bright Angel Trail's descending grade, giving the sense to pedestrians that the building is not too far out of place within the environment. Viewing the studio's northern aspect as it projects over the canyon offers a line of sight that is undiscussed in any related histories. Gables are formed at the stepped roof line's three western ends. When viewing the studio from the popular vantage point of Trail View Overlook, for instance, the gable's peaks appear to correspond with the distant San Francisco Peaks.¹⁷ Designing the studio with considerations of how the building fits into the landscape, both immediate and distant, displays Underwood's keen eye for blending the natural and built environments at the canyon to seamlessly integrate with one another.

The alterations appear to not only have affected the domestic lives of the Kolbs, but also their professional. Photographs of early mule parties taken by the Kolb Studio depict ten or more riders in a long line, head to tail as they pause just long enough to have their photos taken. Beginning around 1926, mules begin turning outward, with their heads facing the canyon. Just like a parking lot at a grocery store, more mules can fit into the frame if stacked sideways verse head to tail. In addition, the rider's faces towards the rear are easier to make out, a benefit with obvious advantages when trying to sell

¹⁷ Photograph of Kolb Studio from Trail View Overlook, March 2017, Harris Abernathy, Grand Canyon, AZ.

photos to the people in them. From an economic perspective, if the Kolbs could increase the amount of faces in photos, they were increasing their productivity by decreasing the number of photos taken and then processed. When the transition from head to tail, to outward facing began, the practice took six years before the mules fully adopted the new stance during group photos.¹⁸

Mules are creatures of habit. When they are asked to do something time and time again, such as turning outward at the first stop on the canyon trail, over time they will perform the action involuntarily. It is the author's theory that the Kolb brothers initiated the practice of facing out to increase their business and the mules became habituated to the request. Since a stop at the photo spot was the next command after leaving the corrals, the mules began to associate turning outward with the act of stopping. To date, every tourist that rides a mule at the Grand Canyon, roughly ten thousand a year, is told that the mules face outward upon stopping so that they can "see where not to go."¹⁹ Though the advice may be sage, I argue the practice was created and modified to accommodate the Kolb Studio's location and grew from the communication between the brothers and the guides. Over fifty years after the last mule party rang the bell to single their arrival at the studio, every mule stamps their hooves as they prance perpendicular to the trail.

¹⁸ "Mule Party", NAU.PH.568.2787, item # 11001, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

¹⁹ John Berry, "Mules: History of Mules at the Grand Canyon," discussion with Harris Abernathy, Grand Canyon National Park, AZ 2017.



Figure 9: Kolb Studio under remodel, circa 1925. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.



Figure 10: Until 1926, Kolb Studio mule party photograph resembled groups strung out on the trail similar to this one of President Teddy Roosevelt, John Hance, and entourage. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.



Figure 11: By 1930, all mule parties began uniformly facing should-to-shoulder Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

Chapter Five: South Kaibab Trail

Louis Cramton's story was compelling. As the chair of a House subcommittee for Appropriations, the congressman from Michigan carried sway amongst his peers. Standing in front of the House, he laid before them thirty years of the Bright Angel Toll Road's history. He took them through the initial creation for mining purposes, through the entanglements with the railroad, past Cameron's transfer to Coconino County, and brought them to the present moment, March 3, 1924. Before the house was a bill authorizing Congress to set aside \$100,000 for funds to secure the toll road from the county. Why, he asked his fellow congressmen, should a private toll road, the only one of its kind within the entire National Park system, be allowed? Introduced by Arizona Congressman Carl Hayden, the bill for acquisition inserted a clause allowing for the \$100,000 to be appropriated for purchasing of the trail, *or* the construction of a new trail within the Grand Canyon.¹

Cramton cited Congress' ability to appropriate funds or negotiate for the trail's transfer from Coconino County to the Department of the Interior because such power was explicitly stipulated in Section IV of the Grand Canyon National Park Act:

That nothing herein contained shall affect any valid existing claim, location, or entry, under the laws of the United States . . . or affect, diminish, or impair the right and authority of the county of Coconino . . . to levy and collect tolls for passage of livestock over and upon the Bright Angel Toll Road and Trail and the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized to negotiate. . . with the said county of Coconino for the purchase of said Bright Angel Toll Road and Trail and all rights therein."²

A sentiment bill co-sponsor and former District Attorney for Coconino County, Senator Henry F. Ashurst explained, "We used extreme care to see to it that all the rights of

¹Senator Cramton, Proceedings and Debates, 68th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXV, pt. 4: 3490.

² U.S Statutes at Large, Vol. 40, Part 1, Chap. 44, pp. 1175-78. "An Act to Establish the Grand Canyon National Park in the State of Arizona." S. 390, Public Act No. 277, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Coconino County in or to the Bright Angel Trail should be and were protected.” Within the counties sovereign rights to collect a toll, Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work obliged for the county to continue granting operating permits to “a small green house,” assumed to the Kolb Brothers Studio.³ Though not named, available maps from the time indicate no other building fitting such a description stood on the contested land when the bill was signed.

When the Forest Service transferred custodial duties to the National Park Service, the number of mule riders each day maintained a steady rate, but one not enough to serve the increasing number of tourists. In 1919, the National Park Service recorded 1,575 vehicles entering the park. Just four years later, that number increased to a staggering 11,781. As early as 1920, National Park Superintendent Stephen Mather had promoted a nation-wide automotive trail linking the great national parks to which the motoring public responded enthusiastically. With such a tremendous increase in automotive tourism, the existing road into the park was becoming alarmingly worn. At best, motorists spent four hours jostling along the sixty-three miles of washboard-surfaced road and at worst the road was simply impassable.⁴

On the evening of March 31, 1922, the concierge stationed at the El Tovar’s front desk watched as several men, some familiar, others only by name, entered the hotel’s

³ Senator Cramton, Proceedings and Debates, 68th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXV, pt. 4: 3489-99; Johnston and Leopold, “Grand Canyon Working Plan 25.

⁴ Senator Louis Cramton, Proceedings and Debates, 68th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXV, pt. 4: 3490; Gordon Chappell, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “Grand Canyon Village Historic District,” Coconino County, Arizona, listed on November 20, 1975, 41; Report of the Director of the National Park Service for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1921 and the Travel Season 1921 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921)14-16, 22-23.

dimly light foyer. Representative Louis Cramton, along with Arizona Senator Henry Ashurst, and Representative Carl Hayden, met with members of Coconino County Board of Supervisors, their lawyer, Arizona's road engineer, and representatives of the Fred Harvey Company. The meeting begun preliminary negotiations into the government's acquisition of the Bright Angel Trail under the pretext that the government would fund \$100,000 for road improvements from the small town of Maine, Arizona into the Grand Canyon Village. Originating from the town, the National Park Service proposed constructing a new spur road from the main automobile line known as the Santa Fe Trail before being rerouted as U.S. Route 66. The party walked away with a gentleman's agreement to move forward with the proposed terms.⁵

A year later in March 1923, Cramton and Hayden, now accompanied by bill co-sponsor Congressman Clyde Carter, a Cramton ally on the appropriations committee, visited the Grand Canyon to see for themselves what was causing so much grief in Washington. The congressmen, along with Grand Canyon Superintendent Horace Albright, hiked the Bright Angel into Indian Gardens where, beneath the now mature cottonwood trees planted by Cameron, they witnessed the unmanaged blight of a once prosperous camp. Nearly since the Fred Harvey Company began leading mule parties along the Bright Angel Trail, wranglers had guided their mounts to a hitching post surrounded by riparian lushness. What the congressmen were shown was appealing for National Park standards. Canvas tents, many of which them ripped exposing their frame skeletons, flapped with an out-of-place presence as flies darted around the over-flowing

⁵ Ibid.

outhouses whose spoiled refuse seeped into the flowing waters of Indian Springs. When the Fred Harvey Company took it upon themselves to improve the sanitary conditions at Indian Gardens, an injunction forced sixty mule loads of materials to be hauled back to the rim causing “women, in whom modesty has restrained obedience to demands of nature have suffered permanent and serious injury”⁶

Samples tested in February 1924 indicated high levels of typhoid bacilli from water flowing beneath the privies built in 1909 by Indian Garden caretaker Clarence Spaulding. The outhouses, whose frames had been torn down in 1922, but whose pit lay only cursorily entombed, continued to produce both viral orders and tainted water. When signs warning travelers of water conditions were posted, care taker quickly torn them down by the caretaker. The spring head, which sat upstream from the outhouses, had been cordoned off and samples taken from here indicated no health hazards. Upon seeking permission for mule riders to gain access to the source, the caretaker again denied public access, forcing wranglers to fill canteens and haul them back to the thirsty dudes resting under cottonwood trees. ⁷ In early February 1922, Grand Canyon Superintendent J.R Eakin authorized the installation of a water weir and gauge within one of Cameron’s recently invalidated, but still occupied claims at Indian Gardens. Within a week, an explosion, presumably detonated by Cameron’s caretaker, destroyed the station, sending bits of the weir bobbing in the soiled water.

⁶ Ibid, Cramton, 68th Congress, 3498. Douglas Strong, *Ralph H. Cameron and the Grand Canyon & The Man Who Owned the Grand Canyon*. (Tempe: University of Arizona Press, 1978),1-15.

⁷ Ibid, Cramton, 68th Congress, 3499.

By March 1, 1924, the situation at Indian Gardens had grown so alarming that Superintendent Eakin telegraphed his superiors in Washington: “Sign Warning against danger of water at lunch station Indian Gardens torn down by caretaker. Refuses to permit use of water at spring. Situation impossible, something must be done.”⁸ Only two days later, Congressman Louis Cramton defended the amendment for appropriations. When asked by a fellow senator why the 1920 United States Supreme Court ruling that invalidated Cameron’s claims at Indian Garden had not been enforced, a presumptive Cramton responded that the Justice Department was taking its cues from the Secretary of Interior who had not acted forcefully. Implying the need for haste, Cramton asserted the bureaucratic process, which had been guided by three different Secretaries since the Supreme Court’s decision only four years before, had slowed the needed action. Hopefully the new Secretary, Hubert Work, could be the catalyst, Cramton urged he fellow congressmen to pass the spending measure.⁹

Passing the House, the amendment was picked up two weeks later on the Senate floor where Ralph Cameron defended his dealings at the Grand Canyon. Rebuking any wrongdoing and immediately redirecting blame, Cameron preached the trail’s sale would not benefit his constituents. He claimed that the Forest Service, who managed the lands between the Santa Fe Trail and Grand Canyon National Park, were appropriating \$750,000 to build a new road into the park. Why, Cameron asked, should the county sell one of its larger fund generators if they would be getting a new road anyways? In 1924, Coconino County was the second largest county in the country. Of its 18,623 square

⁸ Ibid, Cramton, 68th Congress, 3499.

⁹ Ibid, Cramton, 68th Congress, 3499.

miles, over 85% was in some way untaxable, be it tribal reservations, Forest Service, or Department of the Interior. Such an enormous county with so little taxable property meant the county was only able to collect property tax on roughly 11% of land.¹⁰ Likewise, the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe had been doing all they could to avoid paying for decades. Since the National Park Service took over administrative control, an average of 5,000 mule riders paid the toll, meaning roughly \$5,000 was deposited each year into the county's coffers.

To Senator Cameron, the situation was clear. If the Board of Supervisors would not sell the trail out right to the Park Service, the service would build a new trail to undermine the Bright Angel's economic vitality. For nearly a half hour, Cameron stood on the senate floor lambasting Cramton's efforts to what one senator referred to as means "to coerce and browbeat the country authorities into selling their rights"¹¹

After a quick reference to state laws, Cameron confirmed that county boards were unable to relinquish county property without a citizen vote. Further undermining Cramton's appropriation efforts, Cameron quoted Horace Albright in a letter he sent to Secretary of the Interior Work and anticipated a higher price of \$250,000 for the road's proper construction. Taking Albright's quote, Cameron informed the Coconino County supervisors to the "deceptions used in the negotiations." Upon learning the incongruent price tags, the board members rejected the federal government's offer.¹² When the Senate voted on the proposed amendment. Senator Cameron added an amendment allowing the

¹⁰ Senator Ralph Cameron, Proceedings and Debates, 69th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXVII, pt. 2: 12971-12973.

¹¹ Senator Ralph Cameron, Proceedings and Debates, 69th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* LXVII, pt. 2: 12971.

¹² *Ibid*, Cameron, 69th Congress.

citizens of Coconino County to vote on the trail's sale. With the stipulation agreed to, the Senate approved the appropriation.

When brought before voters eight months later in the November election, unsurprisingly, the heavily independent citizenry rejected the government's proposal. Cameron had again leveraged his sway to keep his fight alive for his toll road. Though Cameron no longer personally controlled the trail, he still influenced Coconino County's political machine. Upon being denied acquisition, the Department of the Interior initiated the second option in Hayden's bill, appropriating funds for a new trail.

Arizona state laws stipulated that no competing trail could be constructed within one mile of an existing toll road, so in December 1924 crews began surveying three miles east of the Bright Angel for the Yaki trail from Yaki Point to the existing South Kaibab trail at Tip-Off. The new trail complemented the Hermits to Bright Angel loop along the Tonto formation, while also circumventing tolls. Unlike the Bright Angel, the Yaki Trail, which was later renamed South Kaibab Trail, was built where a natural fault-line did not exist. Creating a trail where none had been was not without its challenges. Though the topography was difficult, it was at the same time liberating since designers were not beholden to following the natural path of least resistance. Rather, crews could position the trail in continuous sunlight, reducing the frightful experience of a slippery trail, claiming "all of the advantages of the old and none of its dangers."¹³ The upper section of the Bright Angel Trail hides in shadow, resulting in ice accumulation that becomes a

¹³ "Bright Angel Trail May Be Abandoned" *Daily Star*, Tucson, Arizona, August 30, 1927, 2. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 21-22.

safety concern for riders and pedestrians. To reduce the risk of slipping, mules are “sharp-shod when necessary.” Today, Barium is welded onto each shoe like a pair of cleats. In the past, chunks of iron, bolts, and nuts were affixed.¹⁴

The Fred Harvey Company used the new trail to begin consolidating its empire into a more village-centric design. The company built a barn and corral at Yaki Point to shelter their stock during the trail’s construction and to act as the packer barn for the daily resupply runs to Phantom Ranch. With the new trail and the Phantom Ranch facilities, the Fred Harvey Company redirected its efforts into the Bright Angel corridor and by 1930 had abandoned Hermit Camp and the tram system built in 1926 to bring supplies and tourist into the company’s resort camp.¹⁵

From 1925 until 1930 with the closing of Hermit Camp, mule-tourism at Grand Canyon National Park reached its zenith. Tourists were offered over a dozen riding opportunities ranging from one day outings to ten-day cross-canyon excursions. These trips included single day rides down Bright Angel to Plateau Point or the Colorado River. Two-day trips included looping Hermit’s and Bright Angel, as well as down and backs to Hermit Camp, Phantom Ranch, or rim to rim. Three-day excursions went down the South Kaibab to Phantom, with a day ride to Ribbon Falls, and then back up the South Kaibab. There were four-day loops from Hermits to Phantom then up the Kaibab, five-day rim to rim excursions, and ten-day pack trips to Havasupai, Hopi Lands, and the Little Colorado River. Offering a range of saddle types for rider convenience, single day horse rides to

¹⁴ Aaron Lewis, “Xanterra Ferrier: Mule shoes at the Grand Canyon”, discussion with Harris Abernathy, December 20, 2017.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 95.

Drippings Springs or along the rim provided calmer riding experiences. The Fred Harvey Company also controlled the mule industry on the North Rim with day trips to Roaring Springs or over-night trips to Phantom Ranch.¹⁶

When the Union Pacific Rail Road arrived at the North Rim, tourists had an even more fascinating mule riding opportunity. For thirty dollars, travelers could arrive at the Grand Canyon on a Santa Fe train, travel across the canyon on a mule with their luggage strapped to pack animals, spend a night at Phantom Ranch, then continue to the North Rim to be meet by the Union Pacific transportation, there continuing their continental rail tour, perhaps to other national parks. Finally, for the trip of a lifetime, overly ambitious hikers could call a rescue mule for “emergency trail services” to be sent at a price of three dollars for a mule and five dollars for a guide.¹⁷ The practice, which ended decades ago, would no doubt be a premium market with today’s hikers.

As late as 1927, the Fred Harvey Company planned to shift its entire operation to Yaki Point, abandoning the Bright Angel all together, citing dangerous conditions. Prior to significant improvements, riders dismounted and walked sections, sometimes even holding the mule’s tail while ascending. While safety was no doubt a determining factor, an official Grand Canyon information booklet published in 1926 disputes Harvey’s criticisms, touting the Bright Angel Trail as being “well built and kept in good

¹⁶ National Park Service, *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park* (Washington D.C Government Printing Office, 1926), 5, 55-58; “Down into the Grand Canyon” *Perry County Democrat*, Bloomfield, PA, April 30 1924, 1.

¹⁷ National Park Service, *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park* (Washington D.C Government Printing Office, 1930), 65. Cross canyon mule connections were one of the closest links between the Santa Fe Rail Road and the Union Pacific. Arrangements to travel either direction were offered. Freight under 25 pounds was free of charge.

condition.”¹⁸ For indeed, thousands of dollars and countless man-hours had gone into improving riding conditions. The real desire to relocate was to avoid the toll.

The swinging suspension bridge allowed Phantom Ranch to become so popular that it soon became apparent that a more efficient crossing was needed. In November 1927, sensing the looming Bright Angel Trail transfer from the county to the Department of Interior, Superintendent Minor Tillotson requested funding for a new bridge. Urged by haste and not hobbled by many modern-day safety regulations, crews worked feverishly to construct the new span and by August 1928, the state-of-the-art bridge was complete. Like Phantom Ranch, no single piece of steel frame or lumber exceeded nine feet, for nearly every component was brought down piece by piece on the backs of mules. There was one significant exception. When the main cables were brought down, forty-two Havasupai men carried one cable at a time, snaking their way down the now open South Kaibab Trail like a giant centipede with a mule riding caboose where the final feet of cable coiled on either side of its pack.

While constructing the Kaibab Bridge, mule-handlers brought as many as thirty mules at a time into the canyon during the daily supply runs. Pack mules brought compressors weighing hundreds of pounds, coils of cable weighing as much as 2,200 pounds, metal sheets for decking, timber, piping, thousands of rivets, bolts, washers, nuts, and all manner of hardware to the canyon floor. The bridge’s engineering necessitated hard-rock mining equipment to blast a one-hundred-foot tunnel with enough height

¹⁸ “Down into the Grand Canyon,” *Perry County Democrat*, Bloomfield PA, April 30 1924, 1; National Park Service, *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1926), 5.

clearance to not injure a mounted rider. Mule teams even packed down a tram system needed for hoisting hundreds of yards of concrete by the bucket load while erecting the support buttresses to which the cables were fixed.¹⁹ Not only were mules providing the only viable means of transport for such large quantities of materials, but the bridge's design was also formulated specifically for mule traffic.



Figure 12: Crews built specially designed sleds to aid in transporting coils of steel cable. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Crossing any bridge or body of water is known to make an animal balk. To reduce a mule's hesitation, the bridge's macadam decking did not have a single gap showing the river beneath. Not only did the gapless deck reduce the fright-factor of a mule by

¹⁹ "View of Storage Yard Showing Pack Train Being Unloaded," "Pack Train Waiting to be Unloaded at Foot of Yaki Trail," "Photocopy of Historic Drawing Detail of Hanger Connections," "Showing Method of Sledding Wind Cable Down Yaki Trail to Bridge," Historic American Engineering Record, Grand Canyon, Coconino County, AZ, Congressional Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

disguising the lack of terra-ferma, it also provided an equally practical solution to prevent a mule's shoe from catching. Like a flat tire, if a mule was to lose a shoe at the river, the unprotected and unbalanced animal could easily become lame by the time it reached the rim.

National Park Service Chief Engineer K.A. Kitterdige understood a mule's mind. He knew that if he could facilitate mule trains running only one way, then his bridge would be safer. For that reason, he designed the walls to be high enough to safely enclose a mule or rider from pitching over the rails. The slated high walls also acted as blinders to focus an animal's peripheral vision, but probably the most significant mule-based design feature Kitterdige considered was the width. At approximately six-feet wide, a fully loaded pack animal can just barely pass between the guardrails. Additionally, the bridge is narrow enough to prevent mules from bunching up, where they could cause a wreck in one of the worst places along the trail. In 1930, the Park Service boasted that, "unlike the old 'swinging bridge' which it replaces, the new bridge is free from any sway or vibration even when loaded to capacity with a string of saddle or pack animals."²⁰

A truly momentous change came in 1926, when Ralph Cameron lost his reelection. By the spring of 1928 negotiations were underway for the trail's transfer and on May 22, 1928 the Bright Angel Trail was officially transferred to the federal government. By December 1929, trail crews were already hard at work reconfiguring the trail's grade, with a particularly significant rerouting into the Devil's Corkscrew. The National Park Service initiated the beginning of a multiyear inner-canyon development.

²⁰ Ibid; *Rules and Regulations: Grand Canyon National Park* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930), 5.

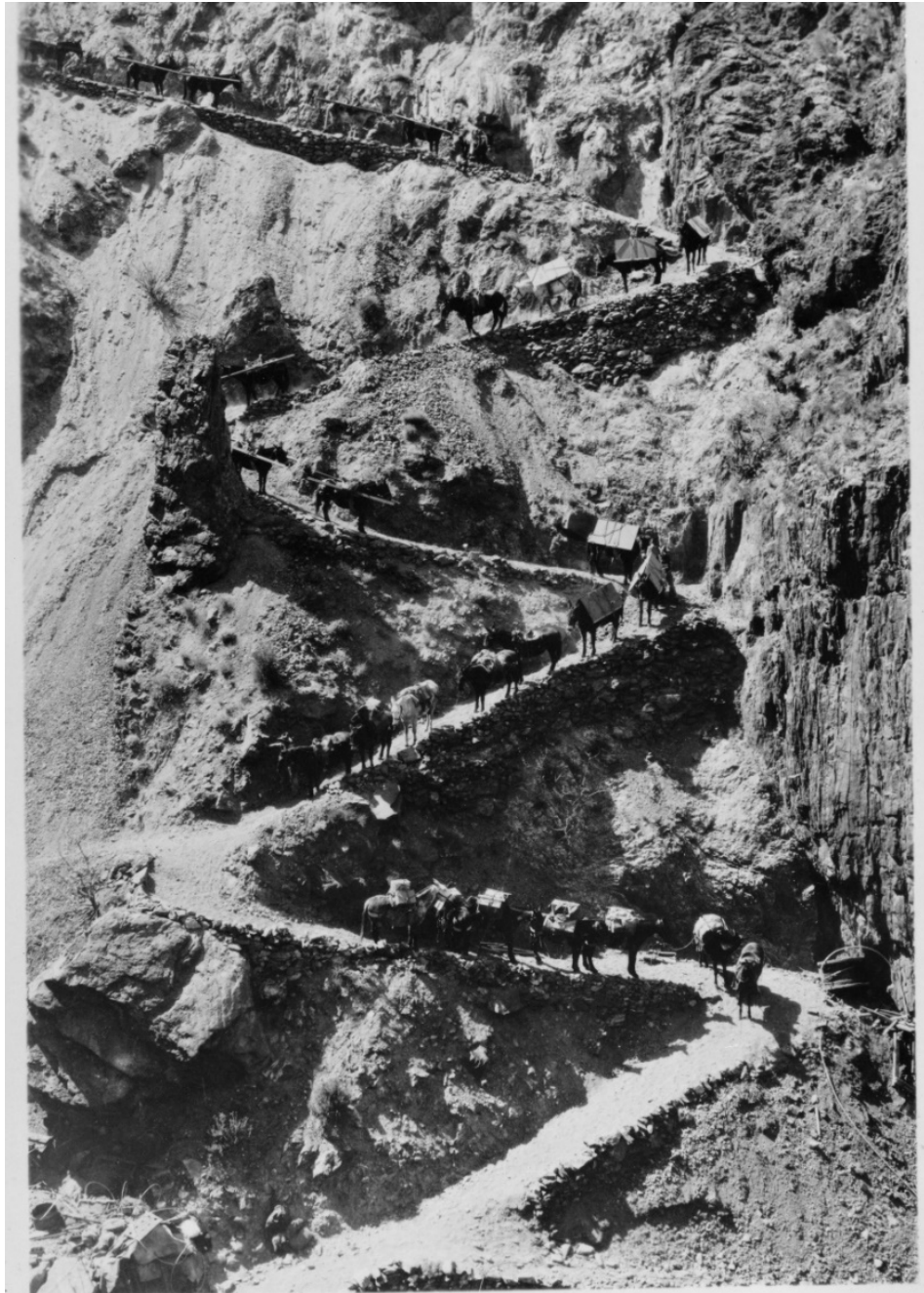


Figure 14: Strings of pack mules hauling bridge building supplies wait to be unloaded. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

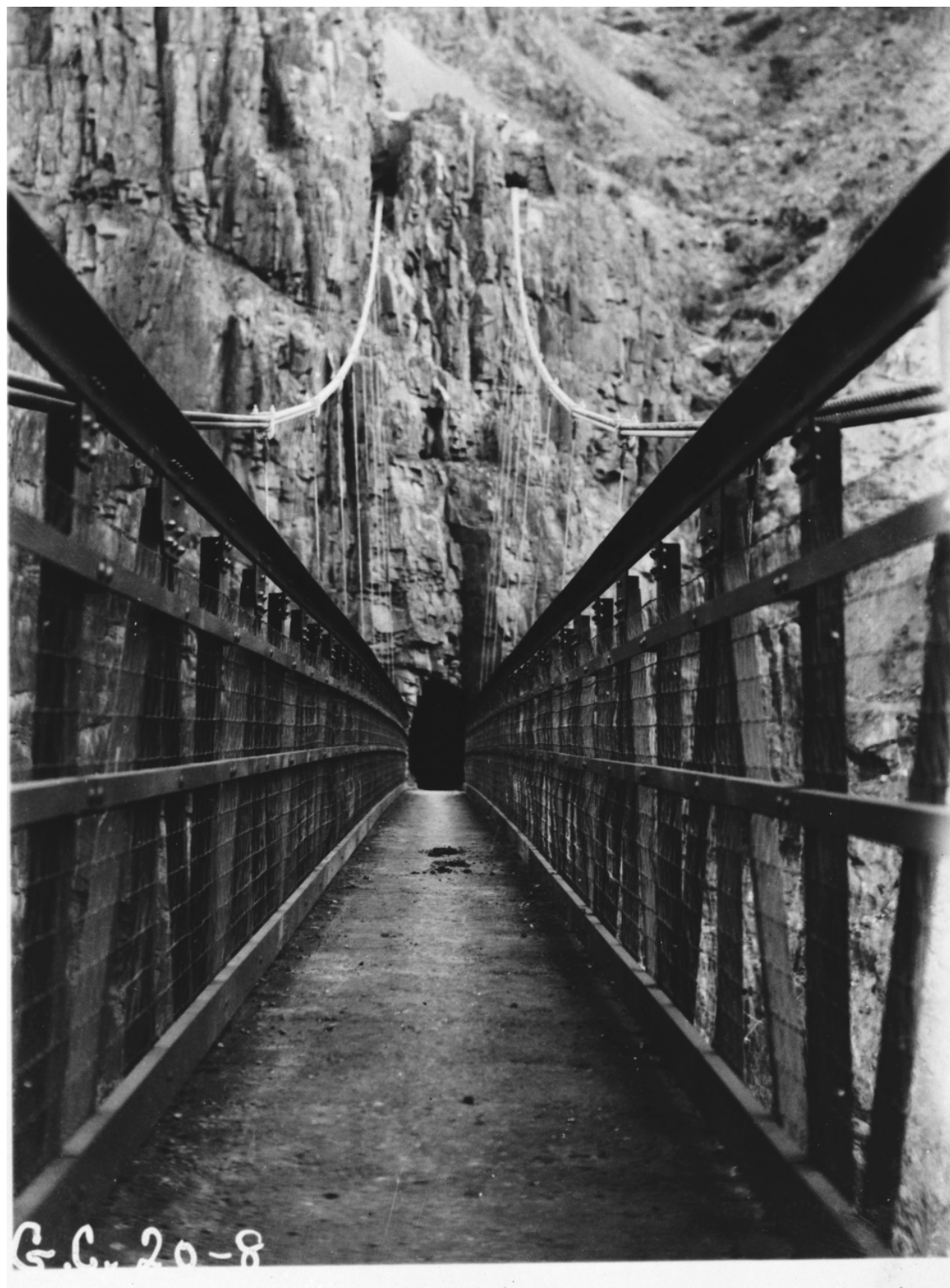


Figure 15: View of a completed Kaibab Bridge looking towards the tunnel. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

During the New Deal decade, Civilian Conservation Corps Company 818 scrapped the Vishnu Schist into a narrow bench wide enough for a loaded pack animal. Each day, while the young men toiled to carve the new trail, the skilled packers from the 7th Army Pack unit brought down all the materials required for extensive trail building and keeping nearly two hundred corps members sheltered and fed. Like today's concessioner pack mules, the soldiers were based at Yaki point and made daily runs into the canyon.²¹ Packing an average of 150-200 pounds per animal, a string of five mules carried between 750-1,000 pounds. A typical day for the 7th, as well as the crews who built the Kaibab Bridge, included between ten to thirty mules, meaning between 1,500 to 6,000 pounds worth of materials moved through the canyon each day. 40,000 pounds of explosives were used on the river trail alone and another 10,000 pounds were used on Clear Creek trail. Over 30,000 drill bits, each weighing over three pounds, were used to bore into the schist, the hardest rock layer found in the canyon. During the construction of the South Kaibab Trail a decade earlier, drilling crews were known to dull as many as seventeen drill bits to achieve an eight-inch-deep hole in the much softer Red Wall Limestone.²² In January 1936, after three years of trail installation, veteran mule packer Shorty Yarberry safely led the first mule string over the River Trail linking the Bright Angel and South Kaibab.²³ With the trail's opening, which snaked its way along a grade

²¹ Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 31; "Work of C.C.C. in Grand Canyon Forms Saga of Accomplishments," *Arizona Republic*, August 9, 1936, 24.

²² Henry Karpinski, 1925 - Building the Kaibab Trail, *Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon, AZ*, August 9, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/1925kaibab.htm>.

²³ Work of C.C.C. in Grand Canyon Forms Saga of Accomplishments, *Arizona Republic*, August 9, 1936, 24.

well above the river's high-water mark, traffic for the Fred Harvey Company's mule rides was again rerouted, this time abandoning connecting the two trails via the Tonto Plateau.

Prior to the completion of the first trans-canyon telephone line in 1922, the manager at the El Tovar Hotel requested Uncle Jim Owen's famed tracking and guiding services for its guests using smoke signals. In 1935 the C.C. C. installed the present Trans-Canyon Telephone Line with the assistance of mules. The design of the towers was based on the need "suited to the rugged terrain, keeping in mind that men and mules would haul in all the supplies."²⁴ The lengths a mule can carry while safely navigating the trail's tight switchbacks determined the height of the towers with most pipes between four to eight feet and capable of being screwed together for added height. Miles of telephone cable made its way between the rims cinched to a pack saddle. Like modern utility lines which run alongside road ways to facilitate the easier transporting of materials, the telephone line followed the Bright Angel Trail on the south rim and the North Kaibab Trail while ascending the north rim.

Throughout the early 1930's C.C.C. crews camped along the rim and at Indian Gardens to further reduce the Bright Angel Trail's steep grades, including building entirely new portions with additional switch backs. The trail's realignment temporary left two trails, the new grade built by the C.C.C. and Cameron's route which the Corps demolished some sections of to return to its natural setting. Additionally, Corps members

²⁴ Terri Cleveland, National Register of Historic Places, "Trans-Canyon Telephone Line," Grand Canyon National Park, Coconino County, Arizona, date received April 9, 1986; Johnston and Aldo, "Grand Canyon Working Plan."

constructed three rest houses along the trail with emergency telephones to provide a safer trail experience for the mule passengers and the growing number of pedestrians hiking the trail.²⁵

Conservation crews also improved the North Kaibab Trail running along and often through the Bright Angel Creek. They carved out a new trail well enough above the typical flood stage and built three small bridges, each designed to mule specifications. By the beginning of World War II, the National Park Service had succeeded in making the Bright Angel corridor the main thoroughfare for inner canyon trails. With the Santa Fe ending rail service during the war, automotive tourism continued to play a significant role in canyon arrivals. As more visitors arrived, the National Park Service adapted the landscape architecture to more conveniently accommodate automotive needs.

²⁵ Anderson, Mike, National Register of Historic Places, "Bright Angel Trail," Grand Canyon Historic District, Grand Canyon, Coconino County, Arizona, listed on June 30, 1992.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The developments along the south rim of the Grand Canyon over the last one hundred and twenty-five years have helped catalyze the national park into an international destination making it the second most visited park in the system. When the National Park Service took over stewardship of the vast canyon in 1919 they chose to restrict any private inholdings and to remove any structures that were deemed undesirable.¹ They razed tourist hotels along the rim eventually and closed mines in efforts to bring the landscape back to its original natural setting.² While the Park Service was terminating various businesses along the rim, they maintained an amicable relationship with the Santa Fe Railway and Fred Harvey Company. When other businesses were being forced to close, the Company was granted new building permits. The political marriage, personified by the superintendent's home built directly across the street from the train's terminal, displayed obvious double standards that frustrated many long-term canyon residents.

The railroad was not the only benefactor to the National Park Service's willingness to allow large capital investments made within park boundaries. Located along the South Rim a mere mile and a half from the village, the rim trail now abruptly diverts into the forest before reemerging at Powell Point, a popular vantage. Beneath the fenced off rim the remnants for the longest running and most productive mine in the

¹ United States Congress House of Representatives, An Act To establish the Grand Canyon National Park in the State February of Arizona, H. R. 2, 65th Congress, Sess. III, February 26, 1919. Section 6 of the act authorized the Secretary of Interior "to permit the prospecting, development, and utilization of the mineral resources of said park upon such terms and for specified periods, or otherwise, as he may deem to be for the best interests of the United States."

² Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel*, 95.

Grand Canyon lay in a rusting heap. The Orphan Mine's owners initially dug for copper, but like so many others in the early twentieth century, it was abandoned. Never relinquishing the patent, investors reopened the mine during the Cold War to extract some of the highest-grade uranium found anywhere in the country. Until its closing in 1969, trucks transporting highly radioactive materials made daily runs from the mine, through the village, and onto uranium processor sites throughout the South West.³

Like railroads and automobiles, equestrian demands significantly shaped the built environment at the Grand Canyon. Today park visitors experience the equestrian legacy by interacting with seven barns, a blacksmith and saddle shop, the wrangler bunk house, Kolb Studio, Lookout Studio, Indian Gardens, Phantom Ranch, the inner canyon trail system, historic corrals, and the Kaibab Bridge.⁴ Among the buildings lost are Hermits Camps, its tramway, the Cameron Brothers and Bass corrals, Kolb Brothers processing room at Indian Gardens, Rust's cable crossing, the first Kaibab Bridge, and Phantom Ranch's blacksmith shop used by the Civilian Conservation Corps before being destroyed by a rock slide.

Amazingly, only one death has ever been reported resulting from a mule ride. On 17 June 1951, three Fred Harvey guides rode two mules as they shuttled the daily string of saddled trail mules from the barn to the rim where guests awaited. When the trio neared the head of the Bright Angel Trail, the mule with two riders was "crowded" out to

³ United States Congress House of Representatives, An Act To establish the Grand Canyon National Park in the State February of Arizona, H. R. 2, 65th Congress, Sess. III, February 26, 1919.

⁴ Gordon Chappell, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Grand Canyon Village Historic District," Coconino County, Arizona, listed on November 20, 1975.

the edge where it lost its footing. The two riders and the mule fell over fifty feet. One rider and the mule sustained only minor injuries; unfortunately, the guide, Lee Smith, perished in the accident.⁵

The usefulness of mules are not limited to carrying tourists and packing supplies, in fact they provide a very specific national and international service. Each day, the last remaining mule-mail service in the country brings letters, proudly emblazoned with the stamp “mailed by mule” from Phantom Ranch and the Havasupai village of Supai to the rim where they are sent all over the world. Mail service to Supai allows packages; however, package service to Phantom Ranch was discontinued in 2013. Mail delivery at Phantom Ranch has become more a novelty than the needed service at Supai where residents depend on the daily supply runs to bring them provisions, materials, and personal mail, including Amazon packages.⁶

Without mules, Grand Canyon National Park simply could not have grown the way it has over the past one hundred twenty years. Today, the only inner canyon trails used by mules are the Bright Angel and the Kaibabs, though occasionally the Tonto is traveled to connect the two and the National Park Service occasionally packs supplies along more remote trails. As was the plan beginning with Phantom Ranch and the South Kaibab Trail, tourism was focused around the existing infrastructure built by the Santa Fe. The natural landscape on which the trails lie has been so significantly altered over the

⁵ “Grand Canyon Guide Dies in Fall,” *Decatur Daily Review*, 18 June 1951, 14. Park guests are often told that no one has ever died in relation to a mule accident. In fact, no paying guest has ever been killed.

⁶ Laura Morales, “Package Delivery Halts, But Grand Canyon's Mules Trudge On,” *National Public Radio*. 13 April 2013; Hannah S. Ostroff, “In the Grand Canyon, the U.S. Postal Service Still Delivers Mail by Mule”, *Smithsonian Insider*, 25 Aug 2016.

years, largely by mule travel, that the irreparable damage of a well-worn path now benefits hikers more than mules.⁷ Complementing the existing cultural landscapes, mules have become part of the tourism experience at Grand Canyon National Park. Arguably more pictures have been taken of mules than any other single attraction at the Grand Canyon, or any national park for that matter. From the thousands of Kolb Brothers photographs to millions of visitors with cell phones, the iconography of mules at the Grand Canyon has embedded itself into the international identity of Grand Canyon National Park.

The tack and equipment used by Grand Canyon mules and their handlers has changed little over the decades. Visitors retain the experience of interacting with traditional means of mobility in a modern context. The authenticity of the mule experience at the Grand Canyon is very much an aspect of heritage tourism that draws park attendees to Grand Canyon Village.

Thousands of individuals were photographed mounted on mules from the Kolb Studio's trailside vantage. For over seventy years, a photo was taken each morning of the daily mule parties. From the flipbook of photographs can be witnessed a visualization of a changing country. The same rocks, trees, far off landmarks, and even some guides hardly change over the years. What does change are the styles of clothing people wear. Social forces, such as the Great Depression are observed by decreased numbers of park

⁷ National Park Service, "*Grand Canyon National Park Final Management Plan*" (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior, August 1995), 11.

visitors riding mules. During World War II, hundreds of service men had their photos taken when they stopped at the canyon during their U.S.O Tour.⁸ In fact, the Kolb Studio was among only a few tourist accommodations kept open during these years.

For the following decades, little changed with the design of the home and studio. Emery Kolb continued to run the film daily, though their grainy footage had long been outdated. In 1960, an aging Emery Kolb, who earlier that year experienced the death of both Ellsworth and his devoted wife Blanche, sold his home and studio to the National Park Service under the condition that he continue to live in his home and operate the studio. Kolb was told that upon his death, the Park Service would do what all other federal land administrators before them had failed to do, raze the structure.

However, six years later the Historic Preservation Act was enacted by Congress. Kolb then planned to use the law to ensure his home and business survived. The last addition to the structure was not completed until 1925 and was therefore ineligible for the so-called fifty-year rule. The building would not fully be eligible until 1975, a date many within the Park Service felt Kolb would not reach. However, in September of 1975, using less than flattering verbiage, the Kolb Studio was included in the Grand Canyon Historic District Nomination stating the studio was “of at least regional significance.”⁹ Relations between Kolb and the Park Service had cooled in the dozen years between

⁸ *Mule Party*, Northern Arizona University, NAU.PH.568.2787, item # 11001, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ; *U.S.O Mule Party*, NAU.PH.568.2787, item # 11721, Emery Kolb Photo Collection, Cline Library Special Collections, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

⁹ Gordon Chappell, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, “Grand Canyon Village Historic District,” Coconino County, Arizona, listed on November 20, 1975.

when Kolb was told his home would be destroyed and its inclusion in the National Register. In December 1976, Emery Kolb died, ending the park's direct connection to its early. His studio home remained.¹⁰

After Emery Kolbs' death, The Grand Canyon Association, the national park's nonprofit organization, briefly took over the mule party photographs, but by the end of March 1977, the final picture was snapped ending a seventy-four-year tradition. When the National Park Service took over the building, they found its structural integrity to be far below standard codes. In the basement workers discovered a support column made from a cedar post mounted on a base of six-inch-high limestone block, remnants of one of the first alterations the studio ever experienced. The floor joists were spread too far, the hand rails too low. The building's skeleton was attached to the canyon's vertical wall by a single steel railroad track dug from a stack of retired rails where it was coated in cement and bound to the canyon, the only thing holding the building to the rim. Deeming the building unsafe for continued use, and perhaps savoring their long-desired ambitions, the Park Service closed the studio to the public for several years, even using the home for office space.¹¹

Eventually the National Park Service made the needed structural improvements to ensure safety and reopened the studio. The structure now serves three main functions. A gift shop again occupies the space where the Kolbs peddled curios for so many years, art and interpretive exhibits describing the Kolbs' history fills the large auditorium space,

¹⁰ Ben Avery, "Kolb Studio Vital to Canyon Legend," *Arizona Republic*, August 25, 1969, 16.

¹¹ *Kolb Studio Historic Structures Report*, Grand Canyon, Az: Grand Canyon National Park Research Library, 1984).

and finally, the domestic quarters are open to limited tours during the slow season. On a busy day, with the weight of dozens of tourists shuffling through the gift shop, the floor still bounces with quivering reverberations.

In today's sentiment of the Grand Canyon, the idea of marring the landscape with a private residence would dismay some citizens. Yet walking along the Grand Canyon's rim in 1904, with the pieced together corrals, flapping wall tents, and manure rank paths, the studio was not all together out of place. The Kolbs' toll booth studio was among the first abodes built along the canyon's rim and served as their castle. The Kolb Studio is representative to the changing political, environmental, and social circumstances witnessed in the developing of federal land agencies over the past century. Each time the Grand Canyon earned a new rank within the public lands or built a new tourist attraction for mule riders, the Kolb Studio responded with additions, alterations, and adaptations. The studio became such an institution that mules were known to stop at the photograph spot three years after Emery Kolbs' death ended mule party photograph tradition.



Figure 15: As they always have, mules continue to play a vital role in day-to-day park administrative needs. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.





Figure 16: Phantom Ranch may seem rustic, but it certainly enjoyed modern amenities such as this washing machine. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

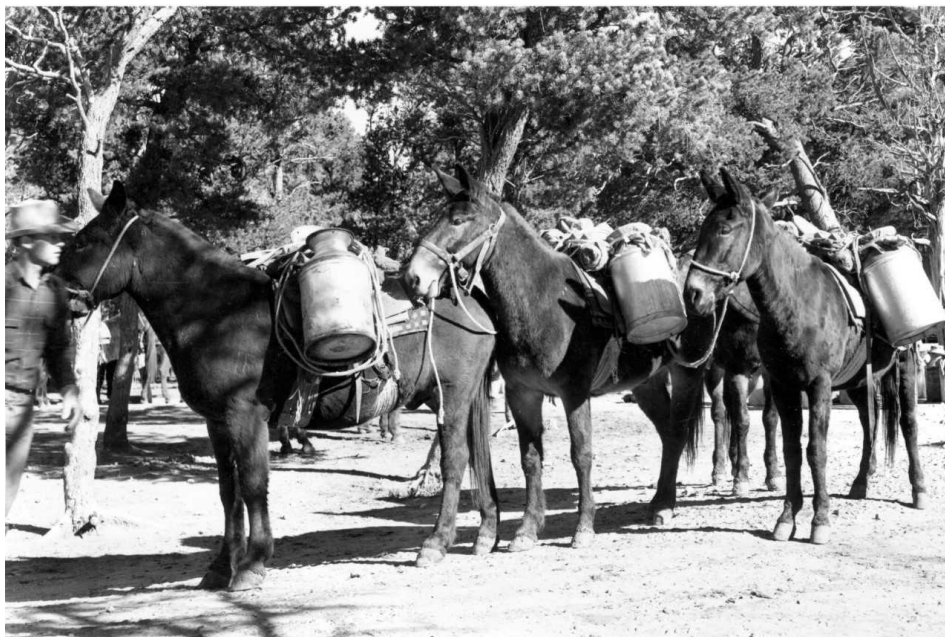


Figure 17: Now facing eradicated by the Park Service, Rainbow Trout were transported within these milk jugs before being introduced into Bright Angel Creek to attract angler. Courtesy of Kolb Collection.

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