

June 16, 2022

Grand Canyon History Tidbit by Kim Besom

The Lowest Down Ranch In The World

Basic tourist facilities had been established at the bottom of the Grand Canyon by David Rust in the very early 1900's, at the junction of Bright Angel Creek and the Colorado River, and had been known as Rust Camp and Roosevelt Camp. But when the concession rights to the camp were transferred to the Fred Harvey Company, they hired Mary Jane Colter to design and name the facility that is currently known as Phantom Ranch. Phantom Ranch opened 100 years ago. The new facility was described by Grand Canyon Superintendent W.W. Crosby in the June 16, 1922, edition of the Williams News:



#10059: PROMOTIONAL PHOTO OF ORIGINAL PHANTOM RANCH BUILDINGS AND BRIGHT ANGEL CREEK, CIRCA 1922

THE LOWEST DOWN RANCH IN THE WORLD

Phantom Ranch, in Grand Canyon National Park, Will Open This Month, Providing Unique Accommodations for Visitors on Trail to Ribbon Falls and President's Forest

On or about 15th of June, Phantom Ranch, a new development in Grand Canyon National Park, will be opened to visitors. The new establishment is situated on the east bank of Bright Angel Creek, a few feet above the level of the Colorado River and approximately half a mile north of the Kaibab Suspension Bridge over the Colorado River. It is one mile vertically below the Rim of the Canyon. In the form of a miniature fruit ranch with a large main building with dining room, rest room and kitchens, and three large cabins for the accommodation of visitors, it will provide something very much out of the ordinary among the many attractive camps in the National parks.

The buildings are of stone construction, multi colored boulders, in which the Canyon abounds having been used throughout. The cabins are furnished in peasant style. Color has been lavishly employed in decoration and the interiors present an extraordinary attractive appearance. A water supply has been installed and each cabin is fitted with a private shower. Generally the service will be on a scale as extraordinary, in a situation where all supplies must be transported by pack, as is the trip down into the Canyon and up Bright Angel Canyon to the north Rim.

The soft grey green of the roof shingles mingling with the varied colors of the exterior woodwork; the surrounding profusion of greenery; the silvery creek winding through the ranch; all with the chaotic background of the Granite Gorge- combine to give an effect, startling and mysterious, yet not anomalous, nestling in the shadow of that Canyon giant, the Temple of Buddha.

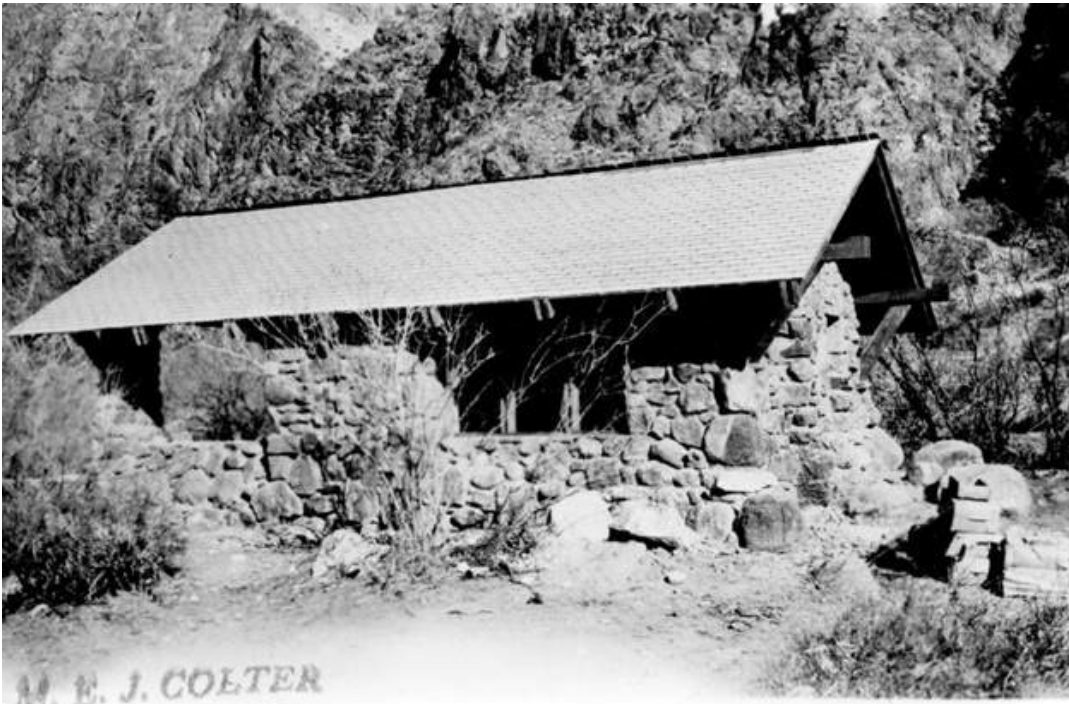
It is safe to say that Phantom Ranch will become one of the most visited places in the National Parks."



#16949: CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN LODGE AT PHANTOM RANCH, 1922



#04439: ORIGINAL PHANTOM RANCH LODGE BUILDING AFTER CONSTRUCTION, CIRCA 1922.



#16953: ORIGINAL PHANTOM RANCH CABIN # 11, JUST AFTER CONSTRUCTION, 1922

Happy birthday Phantom Ranch!



#13913: PHANTOM RANCH EMPLOYEES AWAITING MULE RIDERS, 1922