

**September 8, 2022**

**Grand Canyon History Tidbit by Kim Besom**

**August 1932 Superintendent's Monthly Report**

**So, what was happening here 90 years ago? According to the August 1932 Superintendent Monthly Report, the following were some of the items of note for the month of August:**

**General:** Motorists returning from the Olympics Games around the middle of August boosted the park attendance considerably over the same period for last year. However, toward the latter part of the month motor and train travel both showed a fairly consistent decline.

**General Weather Conditions:** The past month was generally clear and warm with temperatures above normal. While the precipitation for the month was below normal, heavy rains occurred during the week beginning August 22.

**Roads:** The condition of the park roads was generally good except the campground roads showed the effect of much use and the dust nuisance contributed somewhat to the campers' discomfort. It is hoped this unpleasant feature will be eliminated during September when the campground roads will be oiled.

**Superintendent:** On August 1, [the Superintendent] left for the North Rim by horseback, stopping overnight at Phantom Ranch and inspecting in detail, maintenance work on the Kaibab Trail, facilities at Phantom Ranch, Ribbon Falls, Cottonwood, Roaring Springs, etc.



#14329: SUPERINTENDENT TILLOTSON IN CANYON, ON RASTUS THE MULE, UNKNOWN DATE

On August 5, he returned to the South Rim by airplane, and left immediately thereafter by auto for Cameron... [to make] a detailed inspection of bridge sites in connection with the proposed new contract on the Desert View- Cameron job, especially the site for the multiple box culvert in Lee's Canyon and the 300-foot steel viaduct across Wagon Box Canyon.

Between August 22 and August 25, [the Superintendent] took five days payless furlough during which time he visited the Petrified Forest, the Hopi Snake and other ceremonial dances. He then went to Gallup to attend the inter-tribal ceremonials.

**Labor Situation:** Business conditions around the park on both rims are very poor. There is a road contract soon to be started for grading the route between Williams and the Yavapai County Line. This work to be done with Emergency Relief Funds, will be the first project to use staggered employment as provided by the Act. Robert Sullivan, Service Officer for the American Legion at Grand Canyon, is assisting the US Labor Bureau in the selection of unemployed men for work on the above mentioned road project.

With the completion of the pipeline from Indian Garden, most of the men working on this job have left the park. There are a few considered as locals who are still in the park and are in search of employment.

**Equipment and Supplies:** Four hundred feet of fire hose and a floor sander were purchased during the month.

Also, during this month the X-ray machine for the Grand Canyon Hospital was received and installed. In the month previous, which might be considered an average month, it was necessary to send four cases to Flagstaff because X-rays were necessary in connection with insurance company records. This X-ray machine and equipment cost approximately \$3,000.

**New Construction:** Under the allotment for campground construction the camp fire lecture grounds at the Village auto camp were completed. The set up now consists of 45 log seats with a seating capacity of 400 feet that will accommodate 275 to 300 people. Two sets of set tubs were installed at two of the comfort stations at the Village campgrounds.



#00728: CAMPFIRE CIRCLE WITH LOG BENCHES IN GRAND CANYON VILLAGE PUBLIC CAMPGROUND, JULY 1935

The lunch station at Shoshone Point was completed. The work consisted of two fireplace units, six camp tables, one utensil locker, two toilets and ground clearing and cleanup.



#06073: SHOSHONE POINT- FIRE WOOD SHED, CUPBOARD, TABLES AND GRILL, MAY 1937

**Cooperating Governmental Agencies:** The Forest Service cooperated with the Park Service in the matter of removal of cattle from the park. Ranger Parks rode with the cattlemen and rangers engaged in the work, and helped in having the herd gathered shipped out to points as far removed from the park as possible.

**Archeology and History:** At the Tusayan Ruin, Kiva "B" was repaired and reconstructed with a cement base for protection against rain wash. During this work, the traces of several features of the Kiva previously unknown, were discovered.



#00127: NATURALIST EDWIN MCKEE EXAMINING A FIRE PIT IN THE TUSAYAN RUIN KIVA, CIRCA 1931

**Wildlife:** Since lifting the protection to coyotes on the Kaibab Forest, many have been shot by cowboys, tourists and others, with the result that these animals are not seen as frequently as they were during the spring and summer. Many remain, however, and they are doing some apparent harm to the deer herd.

Ample feed throughout the North Rim area is keeping deer scattered. Mushrooms are very plentiful, as are aspen shoots. Deer are already turning color. The presence of many dry does seem to indicate that coyotes have taken numerous fawns this season. As far as can be ascertained, the largest herd of deer seen this year numbered 142 animals.

On August 3, an Arizona Porcupine was found mating on the South Rim. Porcupines are slightly on the increase apparently; at least old hands have spoken frequently of the increasing number of porcupine-attacked young pines.



#17571A: PORCUPINE CLIMBING A TREE, JUNE 1929

A desert Scaly Lizard, Sceloporus magister was collected on the rim of the Canyon near Yavapai Point. This is the first record of this lizard at this altitude.

Numerous specimens of the spadefoot toad, Scaphiopus hammondi, were collected from Greenland Lake, North Rim, on July 1. This is the first record from this National Park.

Forest, plant and wildlife conditions are better than normal. The profusion of flowers on the Kaibab this year is remarkable. Feed grasses are abundant.

**Use of Park Facilities by the Public:** Records show that 25,433 people entered the Park this month as compared to 27,346 people a year ago, a decrease of 7%. Cars entered every day during the month.

**Police Protection:** On August 6 four road workers were arrested at the Community Building by Rangers Williamson and Cox for having whiskey in their possession. The men were held in custody until the next day and then released.

On August 17 a man registered at the Bright Angel Camp under the name of J.P. Jones of Filmore, Kentucky, and was assigned a room in the grey building. As the maid was unable to rouse him the next day, the housekeeper became alarmed and called the porter who forced an outside window and entered Jones' room to find him dead with a pistol in his left hand. From examination of the body, Dr. Carson stated that the man had been dead for some time.

A coroner's jury was assembled and a verdict of suicide was rendered. There were no identifying marks on the body or on the personal effects that would disclose the identity of the person. The name "Jones" was believed to be an assumed name as no record of such a person existed at Filmore, Kentucky. The body was taken over by the County authorities and the remains interred in Potters Field at Flagstaff, Arizona.

On August 7, J.C. Maxwell of Flagstaff was apprehended at Powell Memorial for driving a commercial vehicle with paid passengers. The car was hauling five passengers who had paid \$25.00 for the Canyon trip. Maxwell was informed that he could not use the park roads for commercial purposes and was ordered to cease operations in the park, but the passengers were advised that they could remain.

**Accidents:** Having deposited his passengers, returning from the Hermit Rim Drive, August 24, the driver of one of the Fred Harvey busses backed out of the unloading area at the Bright Angel Camp and struck a pedestrian, Mrs. Maria Soemo, who happened to be standing in the rear of, and in the way of, the bus. Mrs. Soemo was injured internally... from contact with the left front wheel and running gear of the bus. The patient was removed to the hospital and treated by Dr. Carson, but the injury and shock were too severe and the patient died. Mrs. Soemo was an elderly lady, possibly 70 years old, and afflicted with a slight deafness, consequently not hearing the driver sound his horn or note the bus slowly backing out of the parking area. A coroner's jury impaneled at Grand Canyon on August 25 to investigate the death of Mrs. Soemo exonerated the driver from any criminal negligence.

**Medical and Hospital:** Dr. Leslie Foster of the Indian Services, made arrangements with Dr. Carson for the use of the dentist office at the Grand Canyon Hospital to take care of the dental work of Native Americans living at Grand Canyon, particularly those of the Havasupai tribe. This work was done without charge and there is a possibility he may make further occasional trips to the Canyon for this purpose if approval can be secured from the Indian Service.

**Sanitation:** A total of 3,241,726 gallons of water was reclaimed at the sewage plant, an average of 104,571 per day.