

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park  
Arizona



# Civilian Conservation Corps

at Grand Canyon Village

## A Walking Tour





# The Civilian Conservation Corps



## A Legacy Preserved at Grand Canyon Village

**1933** Severe economic depression challenged the confidence of the people of the United States. One in four people was unemployed. Many were homeless. Serious drought gripped large areas of the West and Midwest.

The nation's leaders felt that the economic and social problems demanded immediate action. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was sworn into the presidency on March 4. He called Congress into emergency session on March 9, introduced legislation for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) on March 27, and had the bill on his desk on March 31. On April 7 the first enrollee took the CCC oath! By the end of 1935 the CCC employed more than 500,000 men at over 2,650 camps in every state. The creation of the CCC was a model of speediness. It became the most popular of Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

Unemployed young men (women were not eligible) signed up for a six-month "hitch." The government provided enrollees with barracks-style sleeping space, meals, basic health care, and \$30 per month, of which \$25 went home to assist their families. The CCC assigned enrollees to companies of about 200 men, supervised by regular and reserve military officers. The enrollees completed conservation work on lands across the United States.

Grand Canyon National Park's first CCC contingent arrived on May 29, 1933. CCC crews worked on the South Rim, North Rim, and in the inner canyon until 1942. Companies 818, 819, 847, 2543, 2833, 3318, and 4814 served not only at Grand Canyon, but a few companies also undertook projects near Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona during the winter months.

The original purpose of the CCC was to put young men to work on worthwhile conservation

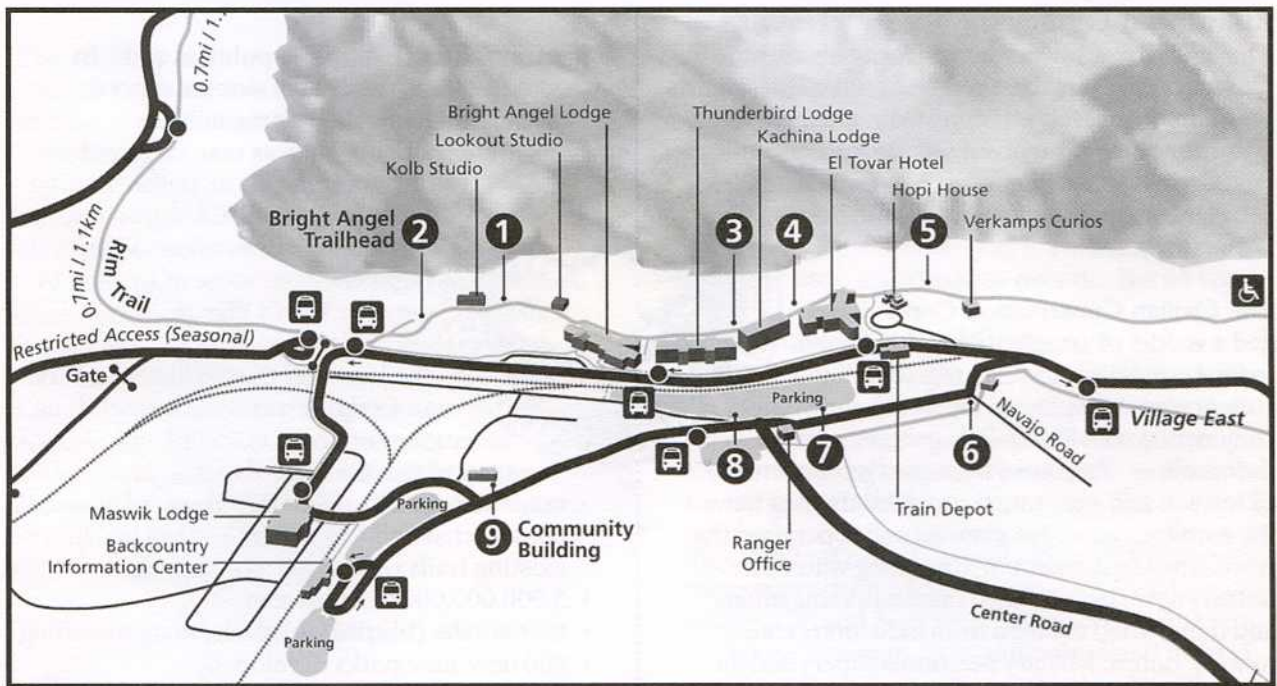
projects that would benefit the country. Early in its existence, however, the program added emphasis to teach "the boys" skills and trades. At Grand Canyon some men learned typing and bookkeeping, while others acquired carpentry, truck driving, plumbing, masonry, drafting, welding, and blacksmithing skills. In addition, the CCC educational advisor taught classes in mathematics, reading, history, grammar, photography, and "Laying Out and Planning a Job" after the days work. Over nine years more than 40,000 previously illiterate men nationwide learned to read, while 400,000 completed high school requirements and others worked on college credits.

### Area Information

**RESTROOMS:** Restrooms are surprisingly rare in Grand Canyon Village, a reminder of the scarcity of water and proximity of the bedrock. Public restrooms are available at the train depot (when the train is at the station), El Tovar Hotel, Bright Angel Lodge, and the Backcountry Information Center in Parking Lot E.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** People with mobility restrictions may find the Grand Canyon Village area difficult to explore. The walk between Kolb Studio and stop 2 (Bright Angel Trailhead) rises steeply and is not wheelchair accessible. The route between stops 5 (North Rim View) and 6 (Navajo Street) contains multiple flights of stairs. Consider reaching stops 1 through 5 from the accessible parking spaces near Hopi House. Accessible restrooms are available in Bright Angel Lodge, El Tovar Hotel, and the Community Building (Stop 9, weekdays only). Reach the Bright Angel Lodge restrooms from the rim side of the building and only after obtaining a key from the front desk.





### The CCC Walking Tour

The walking tour travels a circular route of approximately 1.5 miles (2.4 km), although you can begin at any point and walk as much of the loop as you wish. Directions to each stop are in italics. Features are identified by name or description as there are no numbers.

The full tour takes approximately one to two hours. Carry water with you during the summer. The National Park Service recommends sun protection, a hat and sunscreen, during the warmer months. Do not stand on exposed areas of the rim during thunderstorms. After winter storms, walkways may be slippery.

The text starts at the stairway near Kolb Studio. You can reach Kolb Studio by walking along the rim from El Tovar Hotel or Bright Angel Lodge. Or ride the free shuttle bus to the Bright Angel Lodge stop and walk out to the rim. Or start the tour at any convenient stop.

### 1. Stairway

*From Kolb Studio walk the short distance to the stairs going up.*

Crew members from the Civilian Conservation Corps completed the stairs leading up from Kolb Studio in 1936. Compare the historic photograph to the stairway as it looks today. How many differences can you find? Can you locate the tree in the photo? Notice how much it has grown.





## 2. Bright Angel Trailhead

*Ascend the stairway and walk to the right, following the rim a few hundred feet to the stone-and-pipe mule corral.*

American Indians used the route followed by the Bright Angel Trail long before the first pioneers arrived in the 1880s. Walk 800 feet (250 m) down the trail to just past the first tunnel and look high up on the cliff to see pictographs dating from centuries ago.

In 1891 local entrepreneur Ralph Cameron and his partners improved the trail and charged a toll of \$1 per horse; hikers traveled for free. The trail was transferred to the National Park Service in 1928. The following year the NPS began a major reconstruction of the trail with help from the CCC, completing the work in 1939. The early trail was only two to three feet (less than one meter) wide in spots. With pick, shovel, drill, and dynamite contractors and the CCC boys rerouted and reconstructed the trail to its present four to six foot (1.2 – 2 m) width.



During the same period, the CCC completed rustic rock and timber shelters at 1.5-mile, 3-mile, Indian Garden, and Pipe Creek near the Colorado River. These pleasing shelters are still protecting tens of thousands of trail users from inclement weather each year. All of these resthouses have emergency telephones connected to the Transcanyon Telephone Line and most have water, although the water is turned off in the colder months.

## 3. Transcanyon Telephone Line

*Reverse your direction and walk east back along the rim. Descend the CCC steps and continue past Kolb Studio, Lookout Studio, and Bright Angel Lodge. Look for the bronze plaque on the stone wall.*

Because communication between the North and South Rims was frequently difficult and unreliable, the CCC began construction of a telephone line across the canyon in November 1934. A group started from each side of the canyon, stringing telephone line on metal poles down steep cliffs and over narrow gullies.

Not only was the terrain rugged, but also inner canyon temperatures in the summer frequently exceeded 100°F (40°C)! When completed in September 1935, the line stretched from the North Rim along the North Kaibab Trail to Cottonwood Camp and Phantom Ranch. From Phantom Ranch the line crossed the Colorado River to a spur line on the South Kaibab Trail at the Tipoff. The main line continued along the Bright Angel Trail connecting Phantom



Ranch to Indian Garden, the resthouses, and the South Rim developed area. The line was used so extensively for administrative purposes and rescues that another circuit was added in 1938-39. The Transcanyon Telephone Line has been used frequently to aid hikers, mule riders, and river rafters. When completed, the line was 25 miles (40 km) long, later reduced to 18 (29 km), with a total of 592 metal poles. Although microwave transmissions, satellite phones, and radios have replaced line transmissions (cell phones do not work within the canyon), small portions of the original line are still used today.



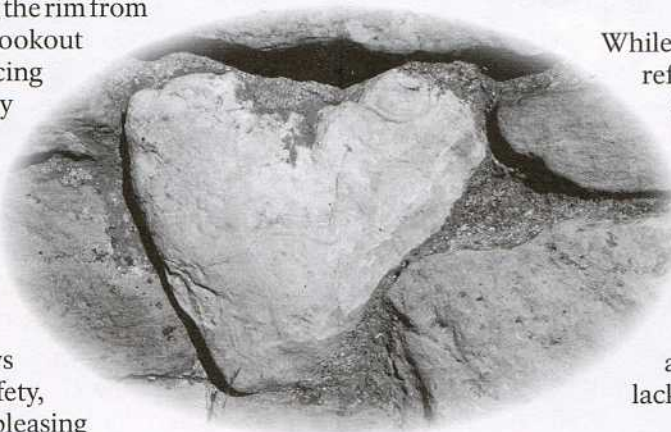
#### 4. A Rock Wall with Heart

*Walk east along the rim to between Kachina Lodge and El Tovar Hotel. Look for the heart-shaped stone in the guard wall.*

Civilian Conservation Corps crews completely rebuilt the rock wall along the rim from Verkamps Curios to Lookout Studio in 1934–35, replacing a deteriorated, poorly constructed dry-laid wall and a section of wooden fence. Project planners standardized dimensions at 27 inches (69 cm) high and 18 inches (46 cm) wide. Although the crews built the walls for safety, they present a very pleasing appearance. Can you find the spot where the men in the picture below were working? Hint: look on the rim by Hopi House.

Look between Kachina Lodge and El Tovar Hotel to see Colter Hall, a two-story rock

building. Colter Hall has served as housing for single women concession employees since it was built in the 1930s. Did a CCC boy carve the stone heart and place it in the wall as a symbol to his beloved in Colter Hall? Or is this just an interesting natural rock? No one knows.



While the CCC crews were refurbishing the rock wall, they also constructed new log benches. Watch for the log benches as you walk along the rim. Pause to enjoy the view. Are these the original benches? Again, no one is certain as documentation is lacking.

During the summer of 1935, the CCC resurfaced the path along the rim in this area and improved the trail to the east as far as Yavapai Observation Station.



