

October 15, 2021

Grand Canyon History Tidbit by Kim Besom

Early Rim Camping at Grand Canyon

With our first snowfall of the season happening this week, and temperatures dropping, the rim camping season for most is tapering off. This week's tidbit is a pictorial homage to early rim camping at Grand Canyon.

From a 1936 government booklet about the Public Camp Grounds at Grand Canyon:
A camp ground is maintained by the National Park Service near Grand Canyon Village and adjacent to the auto cabins and stores. Motorists bringing their own equipment may make free use of these grounds which are equipped with cooking fireplaces, tables, benches, water, and sanitary facilities. Water is obtained with difficulty in this region and visitors are requested to conserve it as much as possible. Camping is restricted to established sites.

Camp or lunch only in designated areas. All rubbish that will burn should be disposed of in camp fires. Garbage cans are provided for nonflammable refuse. Wood and water are provided in all designated camp grounds.

Information about camping in the North Rim Public campground is similar to that for the South Rim except for the campground locations:

Camp grounds are maintained by the National Park Service at Bright Angel Point and Neil Springs... Picnic areas and campgrounds are also available at Cape Royal and Point Sublime, with sanitary facilities, fireplaces, tables and wood, but no water, which must be carried to these areas by the campers.



#13678: Writer Edgar Wolfe and family wagon camping in Tesuque, NM, on the way to Grand Canyon, 1903.



#07796: Photo titled "Camping on the Rim", circa 1910.



#16006: Camping at Point Sublime on the North Rim, circa 1925



#06823: The Dudley Scott family auto camping, August 1929.

From a 1990 interview with Herbert Lauzon, who grew up at Grand Canyon in the early 1900's: "...they built the campground [and] they had these campfire lectures, [and] almost every night if the weather wasn't bad, they had something, and they were really interesting. They had geologists and biologists and then some local person and Dad [Bert Lauzon] used to give a lot of those lectures on the old-time stuff there."



#12531A: Campers at the South Rim campground, July 1930.



#06060: South Rim campground with an early mobile home, May 1936.

From a 1981 interview with Waldo Wilcox, Grand Canyon Park Engineer in the 1950's:
"...we had to provide all of the firewood in the campgrounds. And things such as that, it really was quite a chore to be able to keep wood in the campgrounds in a place as large as Grand Canyon. There really was no additional money for it. It was just something that they expected to be done and we had to do it. "



#04352A: Occupied campsite at Mather Campground, circa 1963.



A camping style that has made a comeback in recent years... #04700A: New type of camping in a Rambler in the North Rim Campground, July 1964.