

Grand Canyon National Park's Ranger Audio Tour Stop # 7 **Bright Angel Lodge**

Welcome to the Bright Angel Lodge. Each building in the South Rim's Grand Canyon Village has its own character and adds to the history of the area.

The Bright Angel Lodge as it appears today was designed and built by famous Southwest architect Mary Colter in 1935. But the Bright Angel Lodge we see today went through many transformations - originally a hotel, then a camp and finally a lodge. All of its changes were to accommodate increased visitation after the arrival of the train in 1901. Under the direction of the Santa Fe Railroad, Mary Colter's task in designing a fresh look for Bright Angel Lodge was to ensure more moderately priced lodging than was offered at the El Tovar up the hill.

Colter included local flavor in all of her buildings, and especially here at Grand Canyon she drew inspirations from many local sources. Included in the overall theme of this lodge are a couple of historically significant structures that might well have been demolished without her intervention. The Buckey O'Neill Cabin, originally home to one of Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and the Red Horse Station, which served as the post office for 20 years, influenced the new style of the lodge and can both be still used by guests today.

Though Colter was influenced by history, she knew exactly what she wanted from her builders. And all of her plans had to be completely followed. Builders who worked with Colter had countless stories to tell about her attention to detail and not settling for anything that failed to match her plans and expectations completely.

Step inside to visit the history room and discover the geologic fireplace featuring all of the rock layers of the Grand Canyon, from the river cobbles to the youngest rock layer on the rim. During its construction, Colter repeatedly sent men back into the canyon for more rocks of various shapes and sizes and would step in to make changes herself.

Today the Bright Angel Lodge is its own bit of history preserved for visitors to admire and enjoy. Now more than simply a place to stay, its character is a collection of things that have happened here, and it has many stories to tell.