



In Search of Eldorado



Day 58

Sunday

March 3rd

Marble Canyon
To
The Grand Canyon

Weather
50's and windy

Hello to Family & Friends

I awoke a little before 1:00 a.m. with stomach cramps. Thank you Marble Canyon Lodge and Restaurant. That's all I have to say about that.

My first look outside showed the scene on the next page. The fog, mist, clouds, whatever you want to call it, climbing over and down the Vermilion Cliffs, A very cool sight.

I drove back towards Lee's Ferry to check on the Lower Cathedral Wash condition, which was very wet after last night's rain. Too bad, I think I would have enjoyed that hike. I was told that I could get water for the RV at the Lee's Ferry campground dump station, but a sign told me the water had been winterized and I headed south.

I could not find any registered hikes between Marble Canyon and Cameron, so I just decided to get gas and food before heading to the Grand Canyon.

The only food store in Cameron is a gas station market. All I bought was a ½ gallon of milk - \$4.02, and a can of soup - \$3.59. I'm not sure how the Indians survive here with those prices. Of course at what they charge for blankets and jewelry they probably do alright. Lots of newer vehicles for sure.

Eldorado

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



I had to pay \$5 to fill my water tank at an RV Park in Cameron, and then I turned west.

The Little Colorado River runs in a gorge from Springerville to the Colorado River, creating a gorge 100 feet deep at Cameron to 1000 feet deep when it meets big brother. The gorge somewhat parallels HWY 64 to The Grand Canyon and a couple scenic overlooks were recommended. As I pulled into the first one, at the sign far above, another sign said donations only. But there was a kiosk and an attendant and she says it takes a donation. Now to me, a donation means optional and not required, a required donation to me is a fee. I told her I would turn around. This overlook is on Indian land. I kept driving.



Here we are, the jewel in the crown.



After showing my pass and ID and getting a handful of brochures, I drove a little down the road to the desert view overlook.



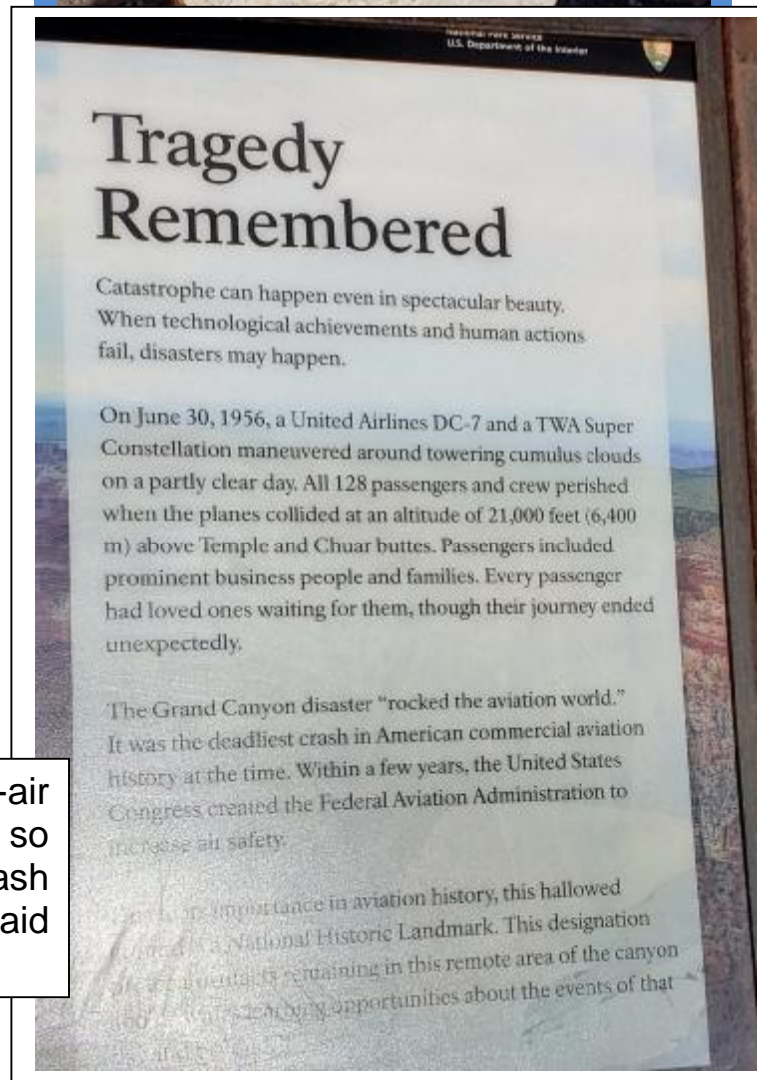
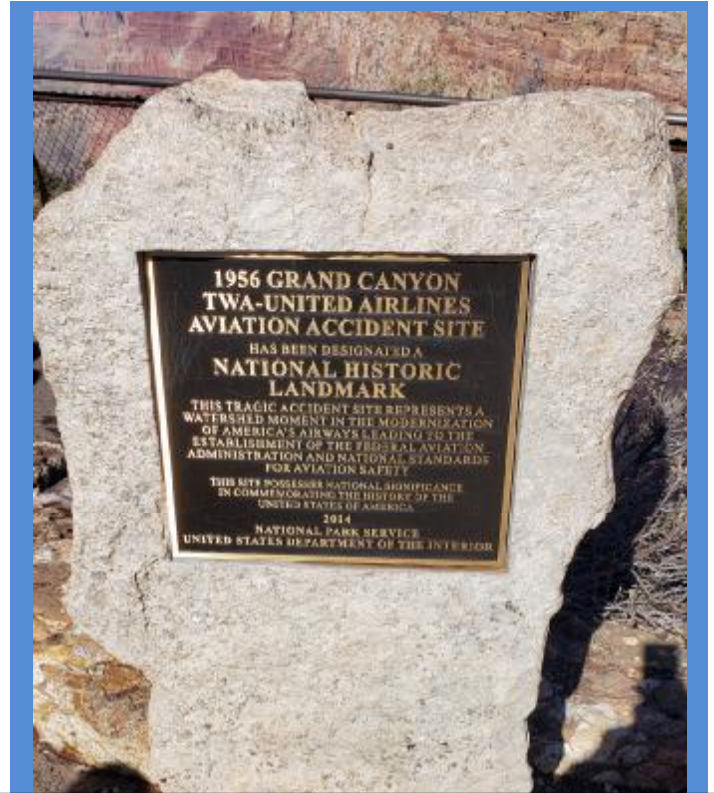
I admit, I was not even aware that this structure existed. The Watchtower was built in the 1930's to give the look and feel of being built by the Ancients. Its 70 feet tall, looks great, has an observation deck, and is the highest point on the south rim.

Revealing Features

Mary Colter's attention to detail is reflected in every element of the Desert View Watchtower.

Each rock and painted wall was intended to convey meaning. Colter used ornamental details, seemingly haphazardly, to create an added charm of the unexpected.

Find triangular and diamond patterned rocks, horizontal bands of different sizes, and actual petroglyphs with pecked designs. The tower features T-shaped doors and tapered windows like buildings hundreds of years old. Colter used uneven masonry surfaces to "create shadows and give more vigor to the walls."



This was the first I had heard of this mid-air collision, of course I was not born yet in 1956 so I have an excuse. It is interesting that this crash led to the formation of the FAA. Nothing is said of the wreckage or bodies being recovered.

**1956 GRAND CANYON
TWA-UNITED AIRLINES
AVIATION ACCIDENT SITE**
HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A
**NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARK**

THIS TRAGIC ACCIDENT SITE REPRESENTS A
WATERSHED MOMENT IN THE MODERNIZATION
OF AMERICA'S AIRWAYS LEADING TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION
ADMINISTRATION AND NATIONAL STANDARDS
FOR AVIATION SAFETY.

THIS SITE POSSESSES NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
IN COMMENDING THE HISTORY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

2014
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Tragedy
Remembered**

Catastrophe can happen even in spectacular beauty. When technological achievements and human actions fail, disasters may happen.

On June 30, 1956, a United Airlines DC-7 and a TWA Super Constellation maneuvered around towering cumulus clouds on a partly clear day. All 128 passengers and crew perished when the planes collided at an altitude of 21,000 feet (6,400 m) above Temple and Chuar buttes. Passengers included prominent business people and families. Every passenger had loved ones waiting for them, though their journey ended unexpectedly.

The Grand Canyon disaster "rocked the aviation world." It was the deadliest crash in American commercial aviation history at the time. Within a few years, the United States Congress created the Federal Aviation Administration to increase air safety.

Of great importance in aviation history, this hallowed site was designated a National Historic Landmark. This designation ensures that the wreckage and remains remaining in this remote area of the canyon will be preserved, providing opportunities about the events of that

I har she blows!!! My first sight of the Grand Canyon since 1966?



This is through the plastic windows on the third floor of the Watchtower so don't mind the reflection.











Spanish Discovery

Near here in late summer of 1540, soldiers from the Spanish expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado became the first Europeans to see Grand Canyon.

After journeying for six months, Coronado's army arrived at the Hopi mesas, east of Grand Canyon. From there Garcia Lopez de Cárdenas, guided by Hopi Indians, led a small party of men to find a reported "great river." After 20 days they reached the south rim of Grand Canyon, emerging from the forest to stand on the edge of this vast chasm.

Cárdenas's party spent three days trying to reach the bottom of the canyon, in vain, then returned to Coronado to report their discovery.

Here is Coronado making an appearance again.







Duck on a Rock?

Grand Canyon's seemingly endless formations evoke shapes that only our imaginations can bring to life. Early mapmakers saw castles and temples in the rocks. Try taking a playful look at Grand Canyon—like imagining the shape of a duck in the rock that stands before you. Decade

after decade, visitors come to this spot to look for the “Duck on a Rock.” What do you see? Nothing in Grand Canyon is static. One day, the duck-like shape will take a different form as the power of erosion slowly sculpts it. Come back in 50 or 100 years and see how the duck has transformed.





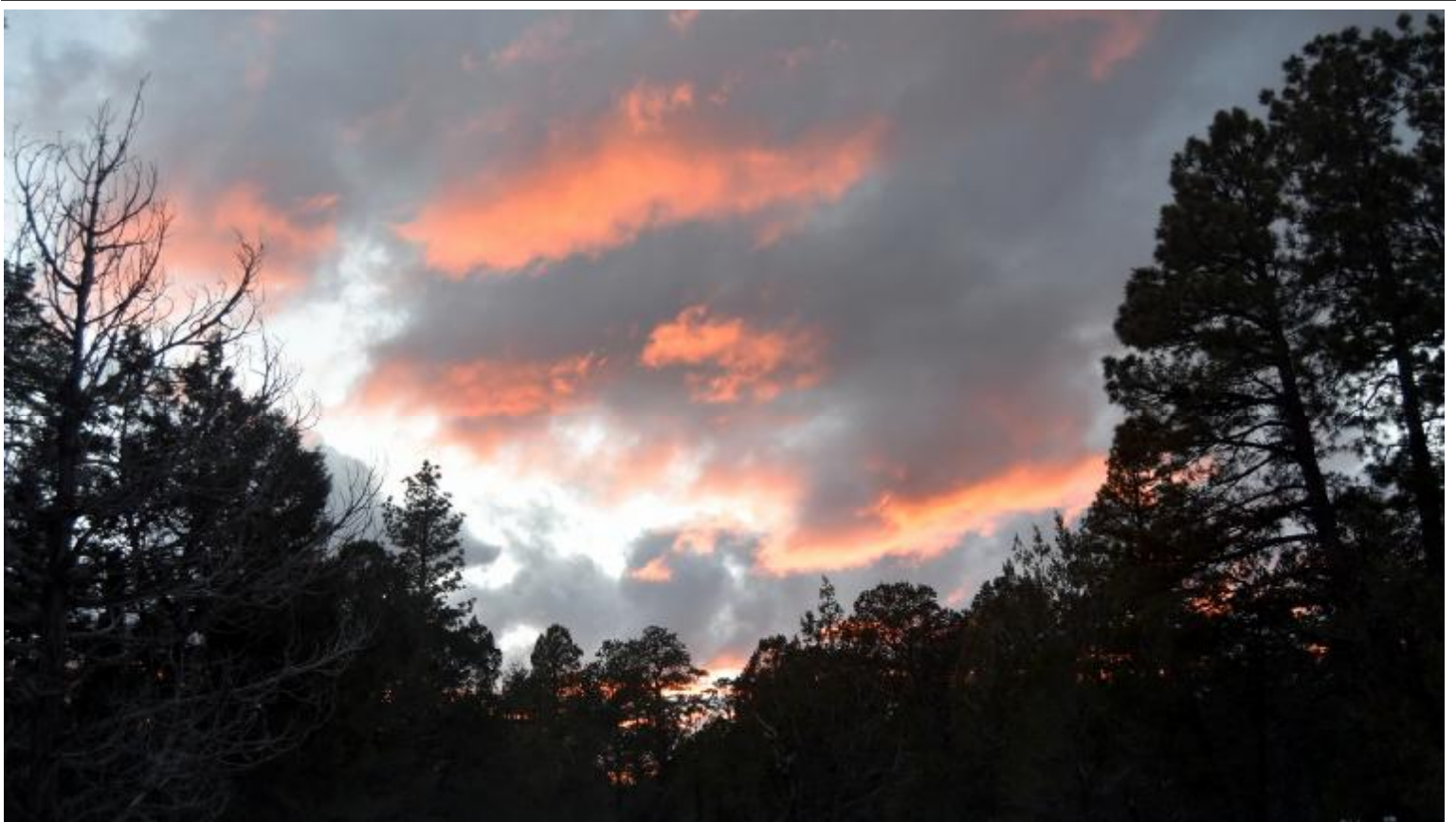
I made it to the visitor center with only ten minutes to spare before closing, so all I did was get some more brochures and info on Ranger talks and hiking. I will make my formal visit tomorrow.

Since it's supposed to be cold tonight I wanted to get a campground spot rather than boondock in order to have electricity for heat. Who would have think that, even after my Good Sam discount, the rate would still be \$53/night. Ouch! But who knows when I'll be back.

I pulled into my spot and only put the leveling boards down next to the tires. I pulled right out to try and catch the sunset at a place not frequented by photographers called Shoshone Point. It's not on any of the maps but I found a description on the web. I only had a half-hour to park and hike the mile trail to the point.



The things I slog through to get a great photo for my fans. I spent most of the hike up on the side of the trail in the snow, rather than the mud. I kept watching the sky and seeing yellow turning to orange on the treetops. I'm not going to make it, I said to myself. It didn't seem like this trail was turning towards the canyon, just running parallel with it. I pulled out my phone and checked the time, 6:24. No way. There is no way I will get to the end and see any color at all, so I turned around.



When I reached this opening in the trees I could not resist. It's not a great one, but just imagine the picture that could have been, a beautiful sunset over the Grand Canyon. I can see it now. Well I could if not for the trees.

You'll never guess what I found when I got back to my campsite – someone had stolen half of the boards I left out for the tires. I had three on the right, and three on the left. The three on the left were gone. Unbelievable.

And then, I noticed I only had one hiking pole. I only took one with me on the Shoshone Point hike. Darn. I must have left it at the trailhead. It will be my first stop in the morning. I think it should still be there since it was dark and I was the last one to leave the parking area.

I am surprised at the crowds, the VC must have had several hundred cars in the parking lot.

It reminds me a little of Disney World here; their own buses that run a regular route; lots of roads all over the place; campgrounds; cabins; hotels; lodges; sights to see.

The Ranger told me to take the south Kaibab Trail into the canyon tomorrow, at least part way, because there are incredible views from there, but I'm not sure. The trail would be down 1000 feet in elevation, and of course that means 1000 feet back up. Not to mention the ice and snow on the trail. I'll sleep on that one.

Until next time.....