



# In Search of Eldorado



Day 59  
Monday

March 4th

Grand Canyon  
National Monument

Weather  
50 and Sunny

## Hello to Family & Friends

Last night before lights out I made plans to be up for the sunrise; where to go; which buses to take; and so on. As I was taking my shoes off I remembered about the hiking pole. Darn, I have to get that before anything else. Alright, forget the sunrise. Retrieving the pole would entail closing down the RV and driving to the Shoshone Trailhead, then back to catch a bus, hiking all day, then setting up camp again. Too much like work. Well good, I don't have to set the alarm and get up early.

I arose as normal and ate breakfast then as I opened the door to go unplug the electric and raise the stabilizers, I realized that last night I couldn't see the second hiking pole next to the first, but there it was. A good sign. No trip to the trailhead. No moving the RV.

The next good sign was that since I was outside I noticed that there was just a bunch of fog and mist. There would have been no sunrise to photograph anyways. Things are looking up.

Believe it or not, number three. As I made my way towards the dumpsters with a bag of garage I walked through the campsite across the aisle behind me. No camper, but my missing leveling boards were sitting there all by themselves. Ah well, they probably saw me pull back in, look around for my boards, but didn't have the guts to bring them over. At least they didn't take them along.

I caught the bus to the VC and saw the fellow mammals below

## Eldorado

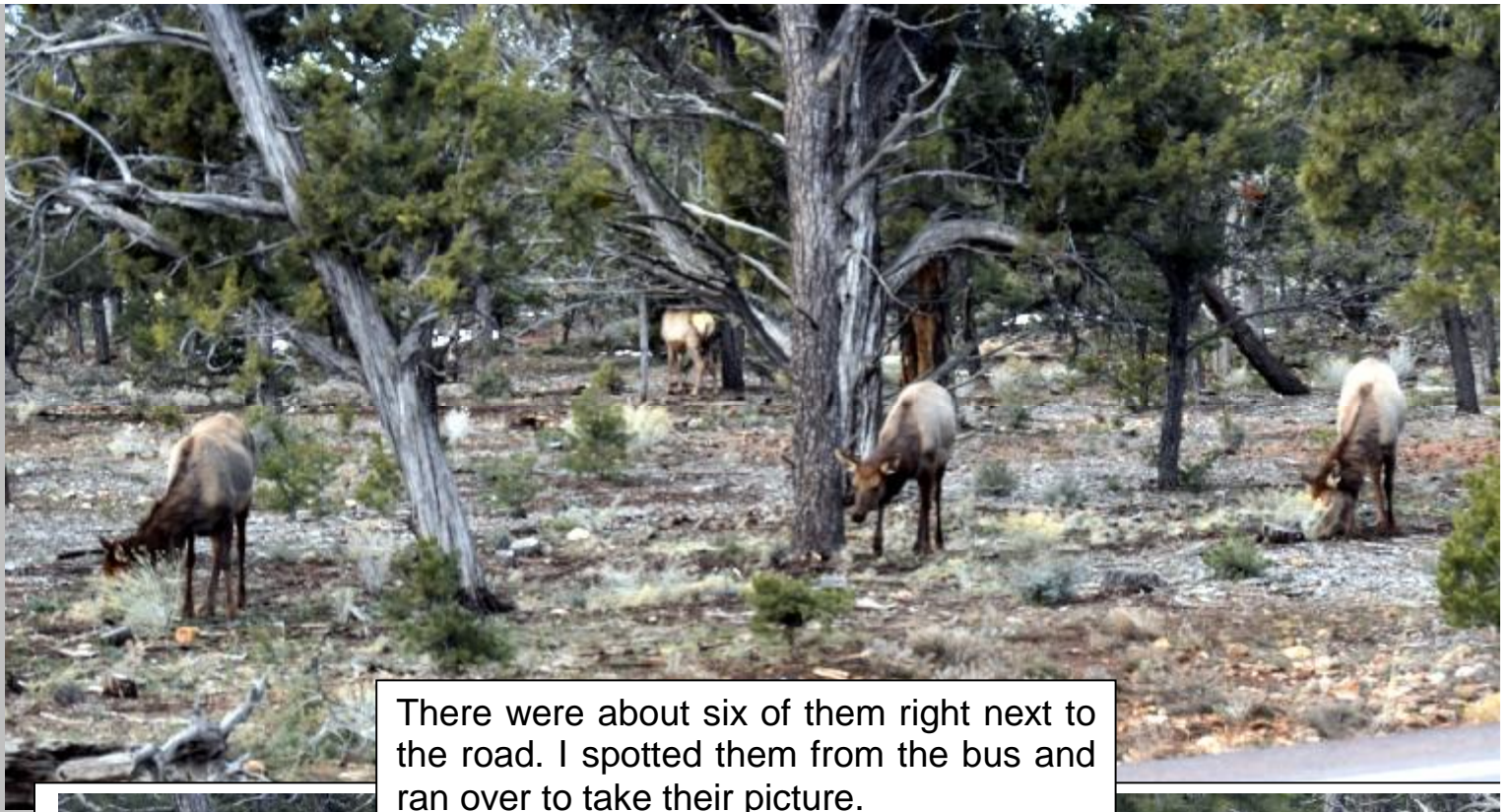
By Edgar Allen Poe

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?'

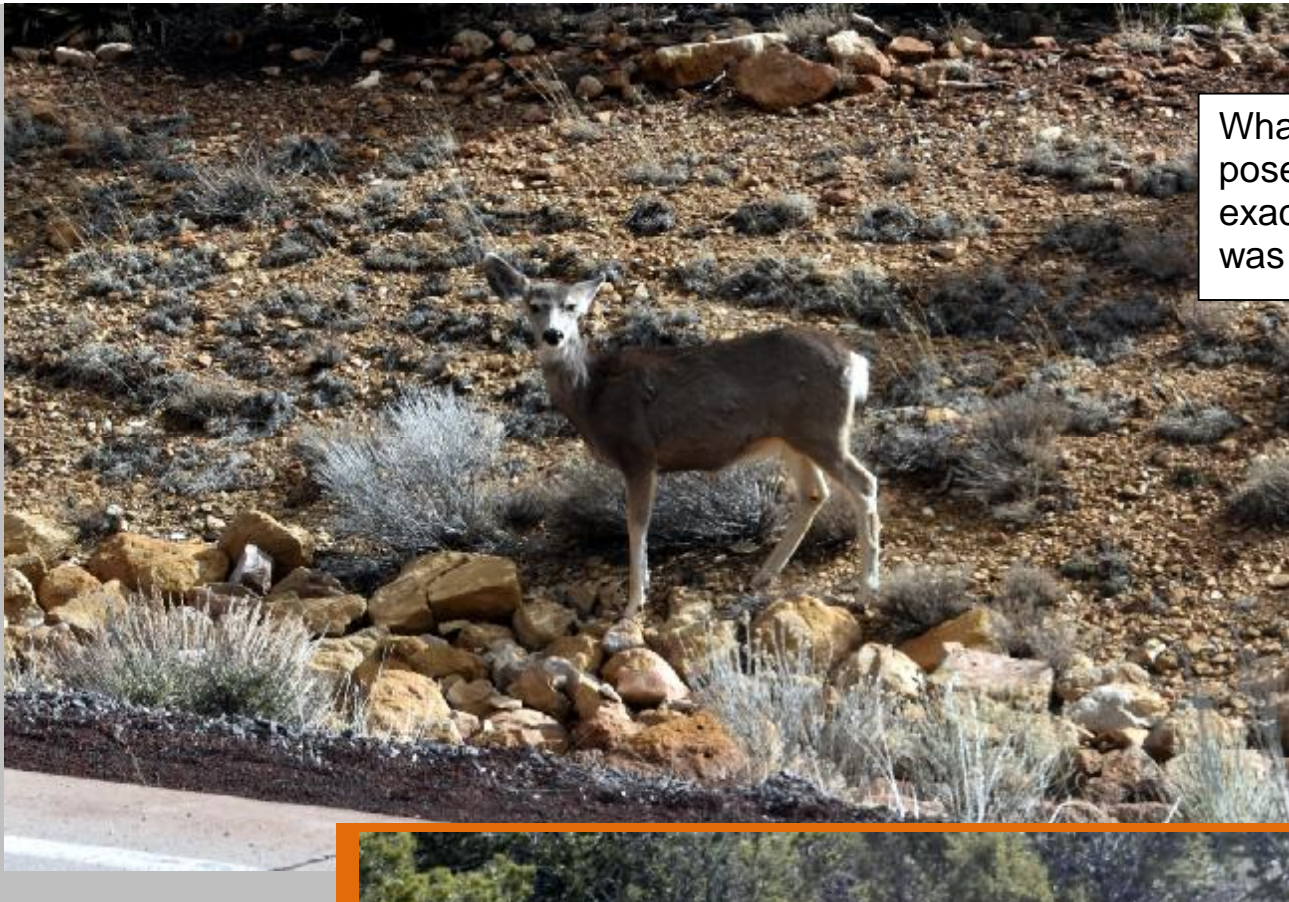
'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



There were about six of them right next to the road. I spotted them from the bus and ran over to take their picture.



As I walked up towards the bus stop I saw the Mule Deer below. Then I realized I was at the wrong bus stop, orange instead of blue, and had to walk all the way back.



What a classic pose. She knew exactly what I was doing.

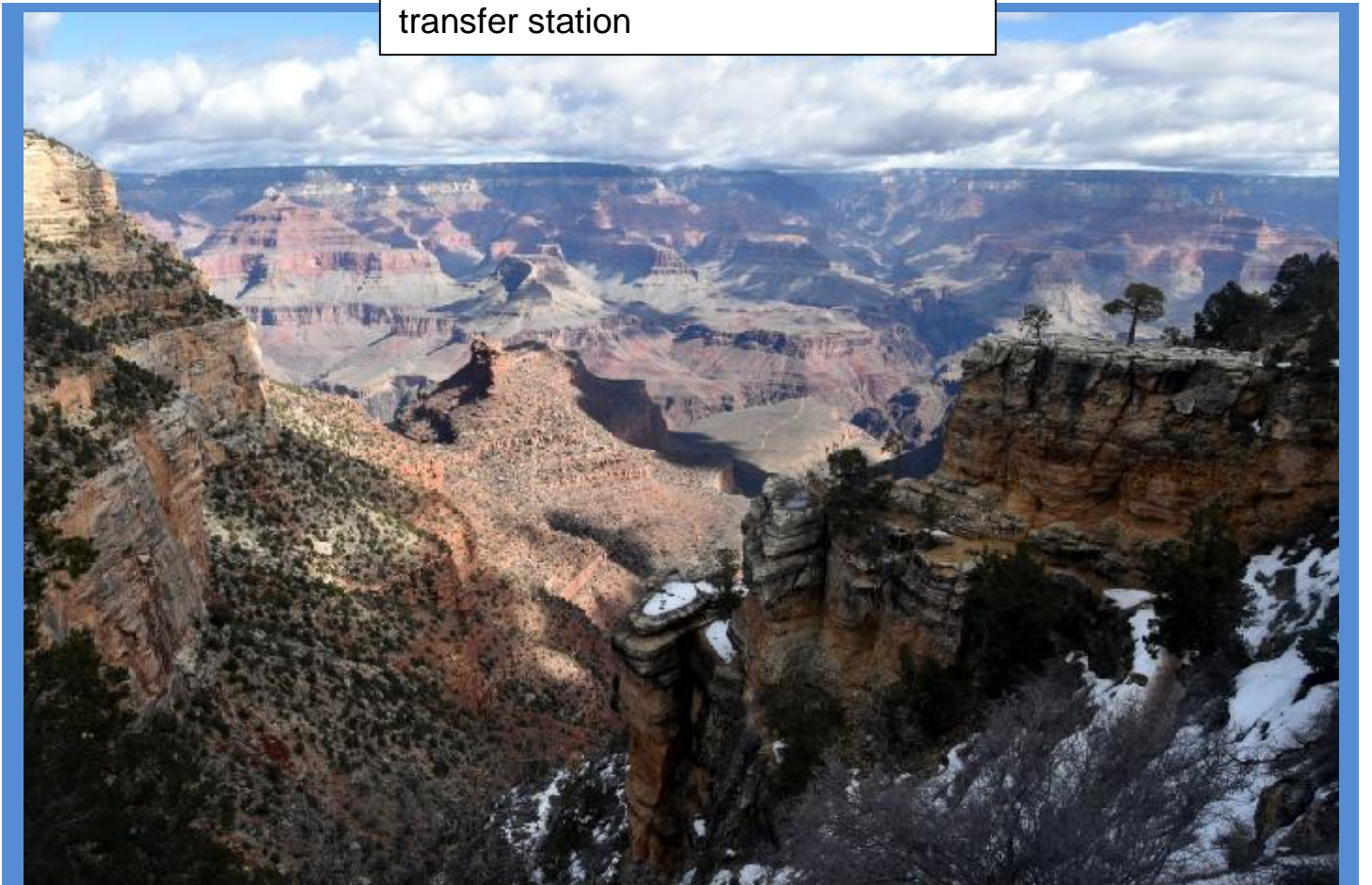


The other two are hard to spot, but look in the shade of the trees and then to the right of that



Above – From the Mather Overlook

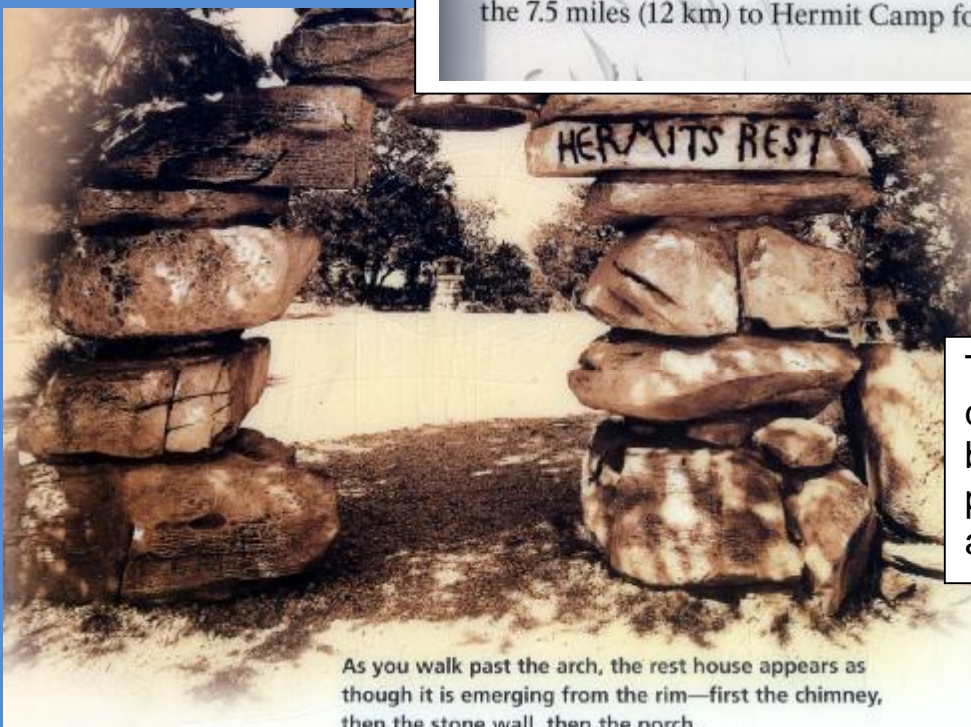
Below – At the blue to red bus transfer station



I had decided to walk the Rim Trail, but to walk it from the end to the start. Most people would start at the transfer station and walk to Hermit's Rest, about 7 miles. So as to have the trail to myself, I took the bus all the way to Hermit's Rest (west), which is pretty cool, and walked back to the transfer station (east). The bus makes nine stops going west and three going east so if I pooped out I could always catch the bus. Plus I would have the wind at my back. The bus driver, Trey, was hilarious and very entertaining the entire trip.



Your visit and rest here is part of a long tradition started in 1914 with the opening of Hermits Rest. After an 8-mile (13 km) buggy ride, you would be greeted by the resident caretaker and offered a refreshing drink to clear the dust from your throat. The smell of mules nearby may have filled the air and smoke wafted a pleasant scent from the stone fireplace. After a short walk you would return to El Tovar, or ride a mule the 7.5 miles (12 km) to Hermit Camp for a delightful meal and restful sleep.



This building was also designed by Mary Colter. Too bad trying to get a good picture of the front would need a drone or a pair of wings.

As you walk past the arch, the rest house appears as though it is emerging from the rim—first the chimney, then the stone wall, then the porch.



I was planning to get lunch here but the snack shop was closed. I took a seat next to the fireplace for a short while, and then hit the trail.

Below is the view from Hermit's Rest



Stretching from the South Kaibab Trailhead west to Hermits Rest, a distance of 14 miles (22 km), the Rim Trail offers some of the grandest views in the park. Most of the trail is paved and some sections are wheelchair accessible. Be sure to bring water. Pets must be leashed.

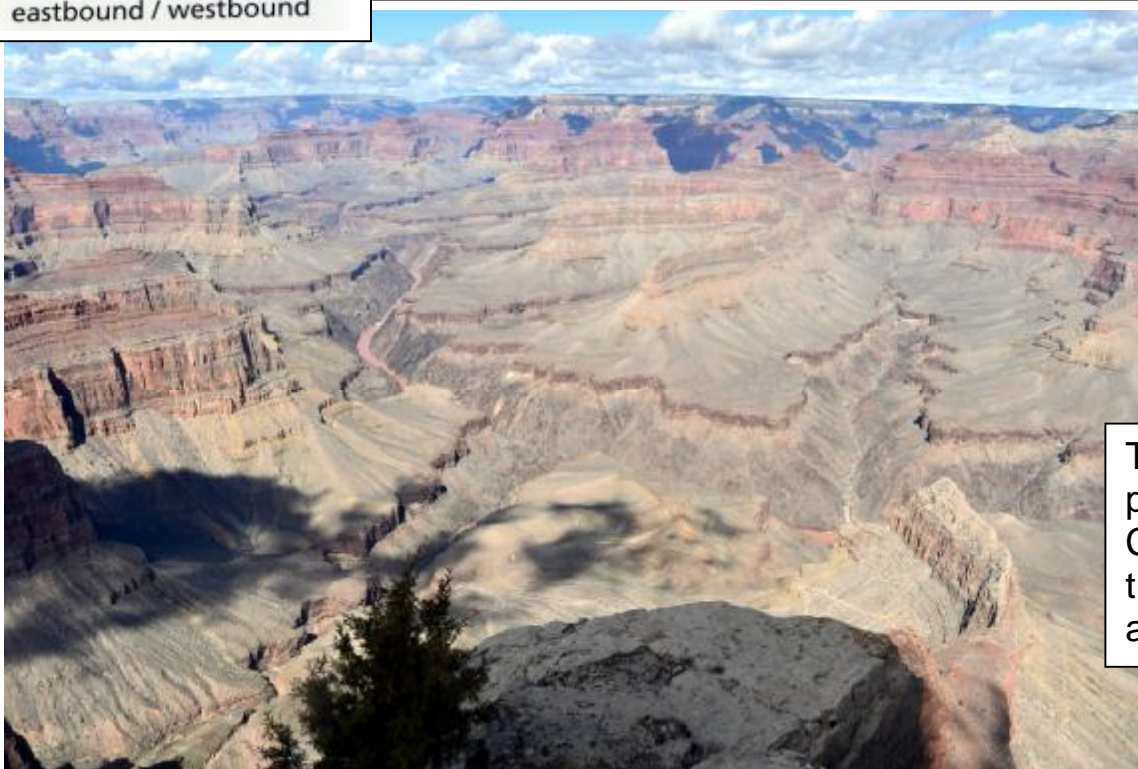
Away from Grand Canyon Village, this is an excellent trail for quiet walks with minimal elevation change. You can access the trail from many of the shuttle bus stops.



Here's the thing, has anyone ever taken a bad picture of The Grand Canyon? I could have taken hundreds, in fact I did take 98, but I whittled it down to what you see here, somewhere in the fifties.



**Pima Point**  
eastbound / westbound

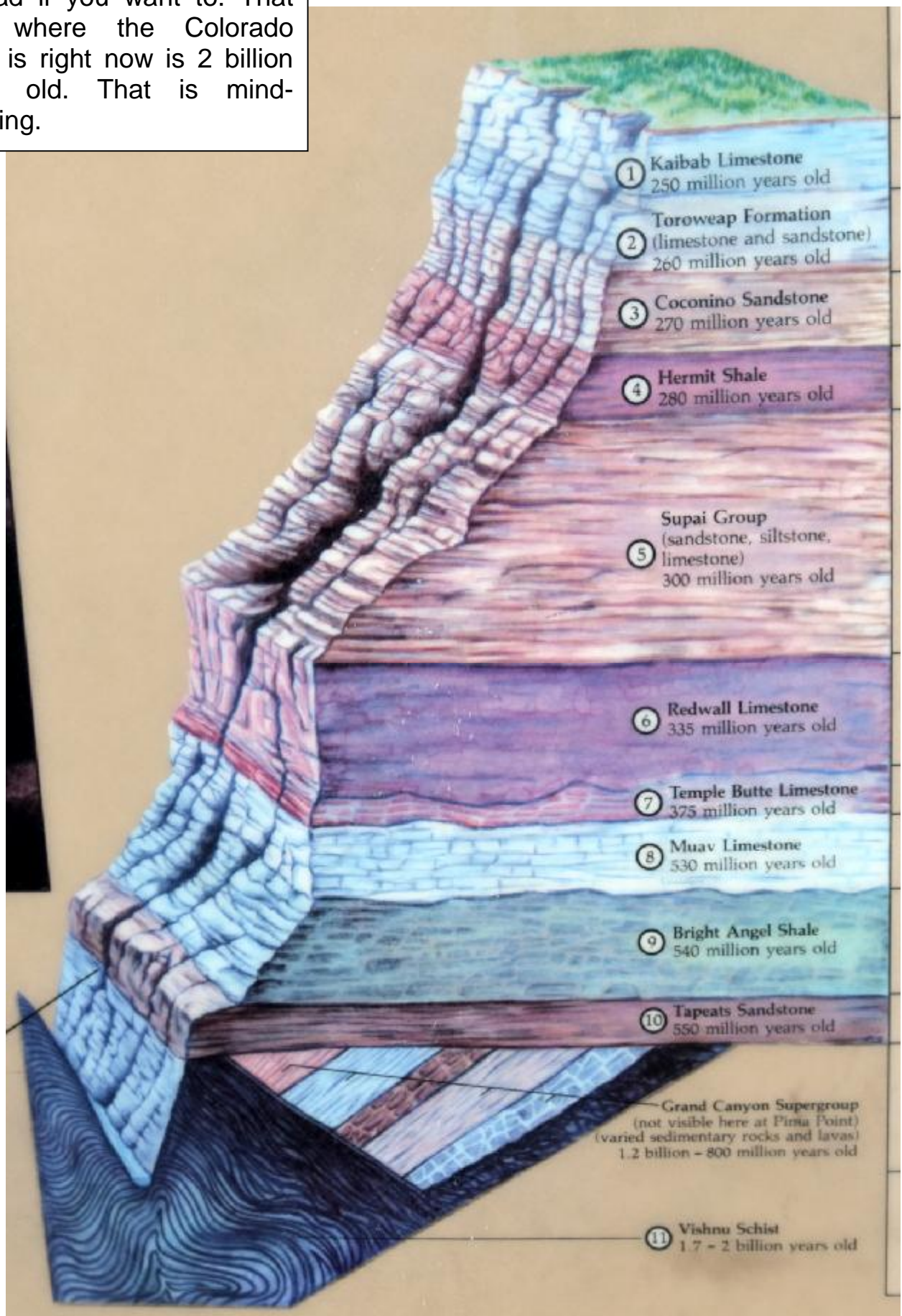


To put things in perspective, the Colorado River down there at the bottom is about 100 yards wide.





I thought this plaque was very interesting and I wanted to make it large enough for you to read if you want to. That rock where the Colorado River is right now is 2 billion years old. That is mind-boggling.





As for the trail – I started out on the paved Rim Trail. As I walked along I noticed what looked like another trail between myself and the canyon, a regular hiking trail. Well this looks interesting, so I started following that trail. Talk about fun – stepping over logs, moving branches out of the way, almost stepping sideways around boulders – and below is the trail and the views you get rewarded with.





Now this is what I call a rim trail. I think this is the Rim Trail the Rangers don't tell anyone about, and I can see why, I wouldn't want to keep an eye on any kids or dogs along here. This trail is not on the maps, only the paved trail.





I took time for a little snack since I didn't get any lunch at Hermit's Rest.





Looking over the edge.





I liked this spot. I liked it so much I tried to duplicate Morgan's classic photo. It turned out ok, the funny part is I couldn't get my Nikon to take a delayed photo so I had to use the phone. Since I couldn't see the screen because the phone was leaning against the camera to remain upright, I had to switch it to a selfie. I didn't realize that the paved trail was only about 15-20 feet away, and since it was a little windy I couldn't hear the shutter, and here I am standing on the rim of The Grand Canyon and yelling 'CAPTURE' into the canyon hoping the phone will take a picture. I wonder if anyone thought I was nuts.



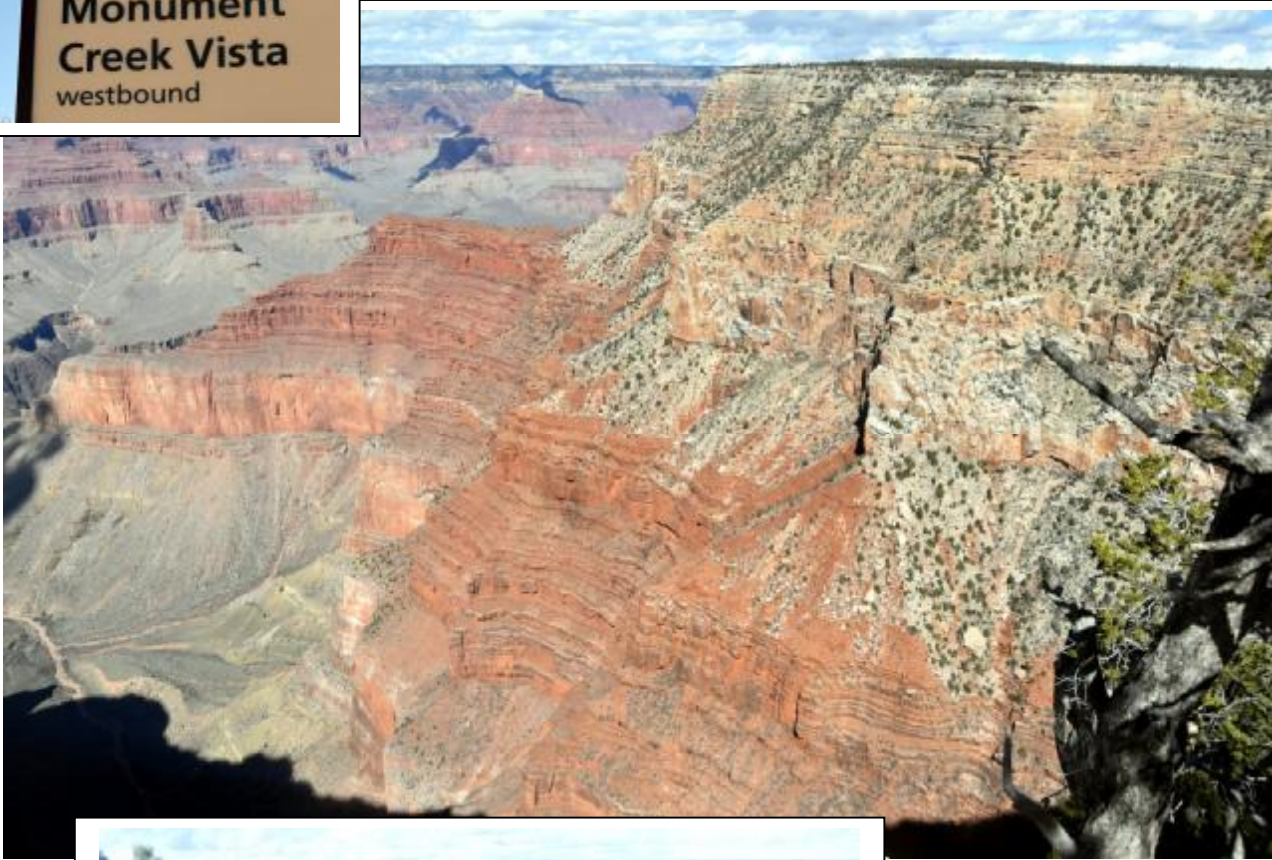


Truthfully, the biggest obstacles to overcome on the 'hidden' rim trail were the piles of mule deer droppings every ten or twenty feet, definitely not overhanging boulders like the one below.

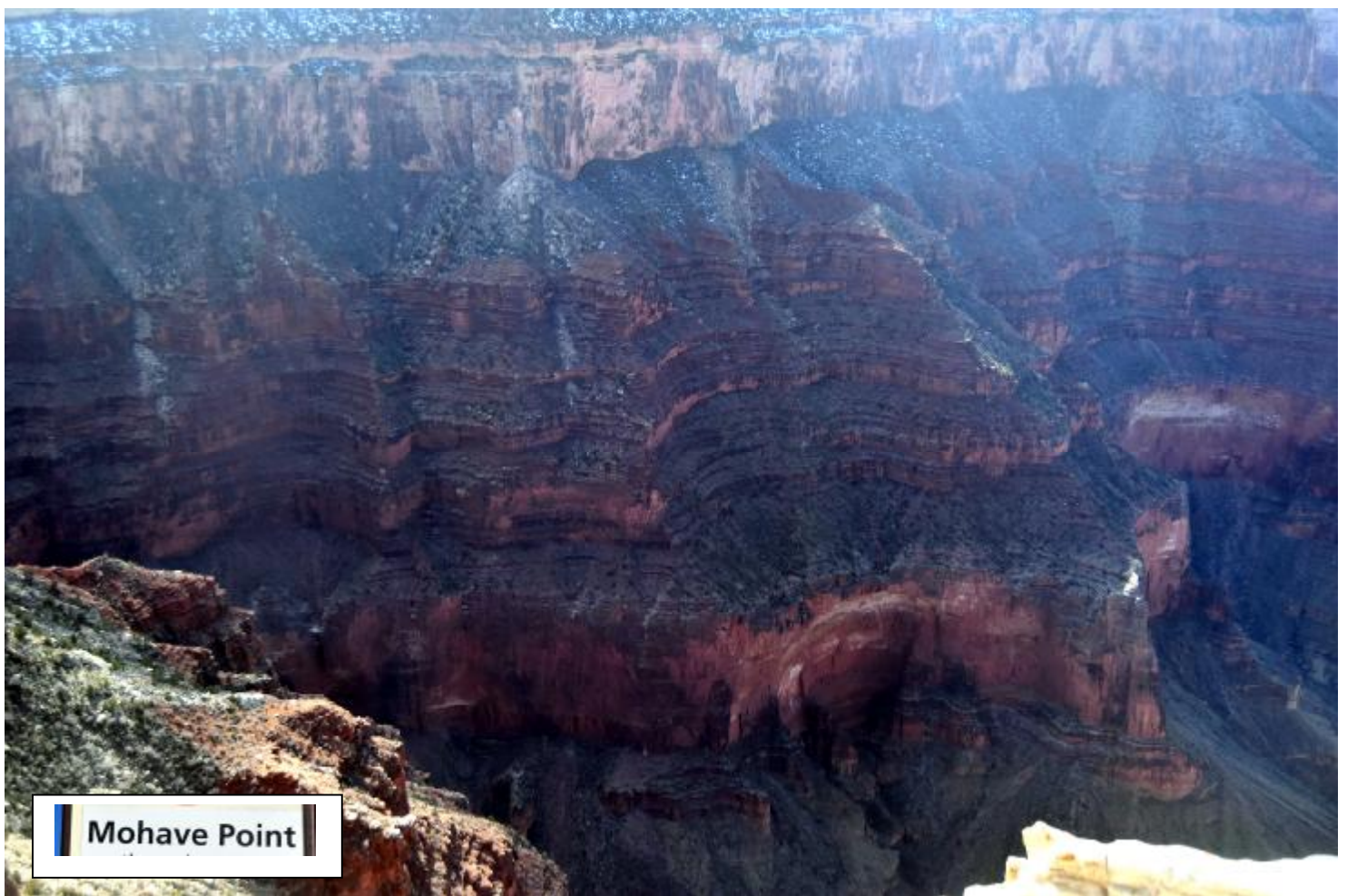




**Monument  
Creek Vista**  
westbound







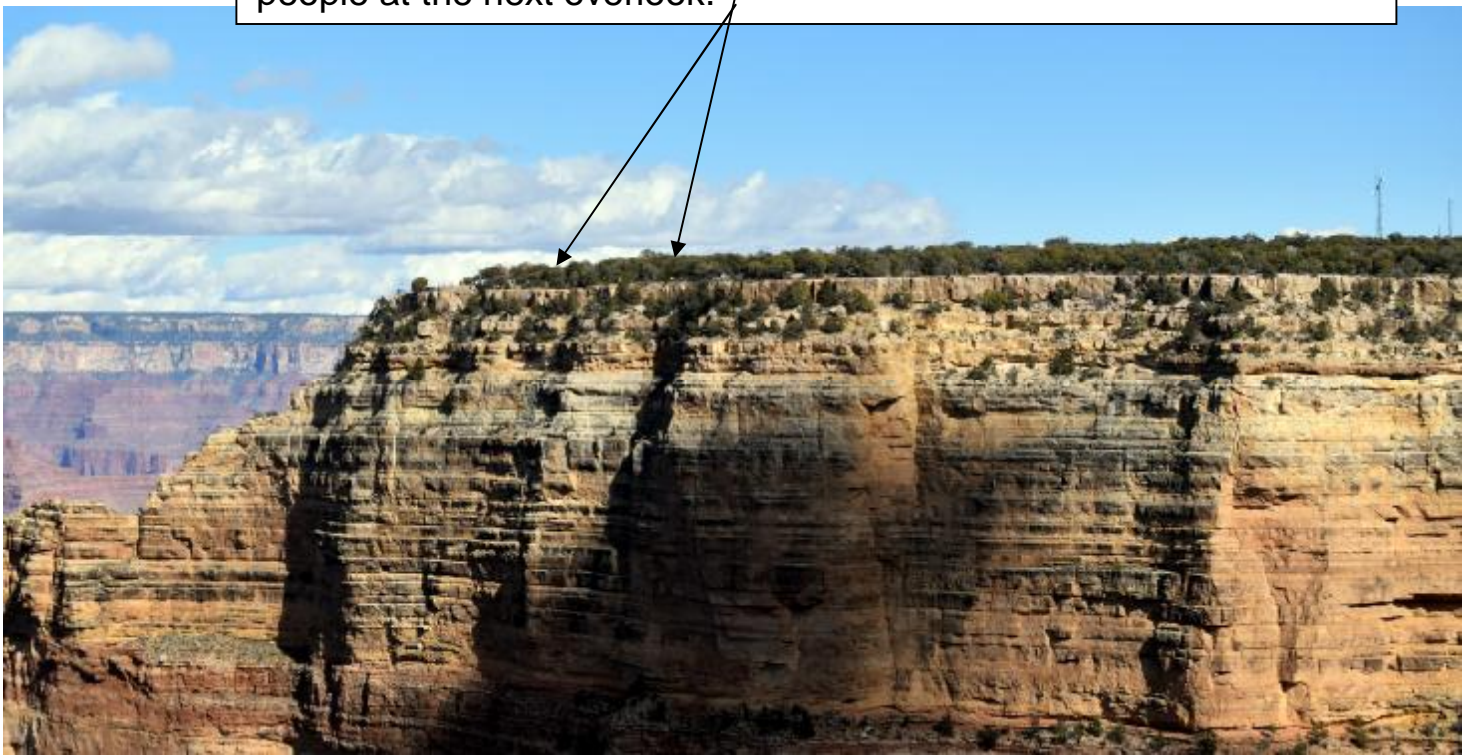
Mohave Point





Time for another snack

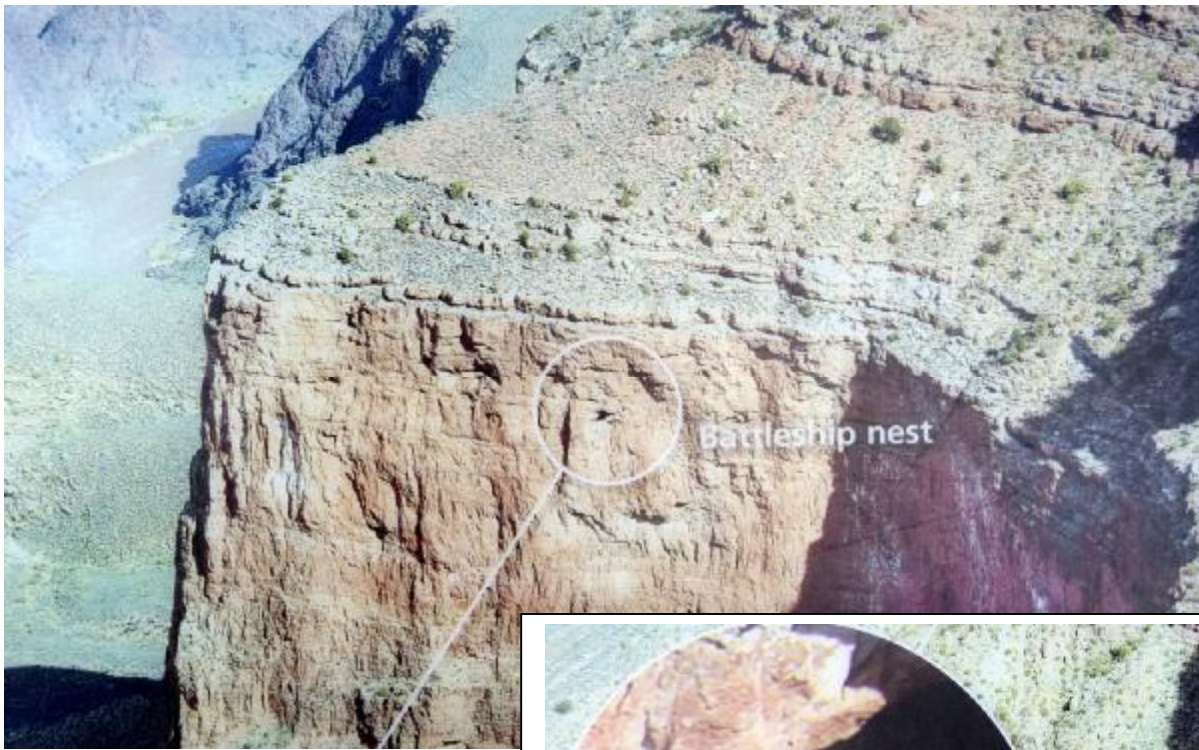
This is the rim I am hiking. If you look closely you can see tiny people at the next overlook.







Battleship Nest



Battleship nest



Juvenile Condor 350 launched from its Battleship nest (close view) at six months old, already sporting a 9-foot (2.7m) wingspan



I'm not sure what happened here, this may be a plaque picture, but I can't find mine of the condor nest.





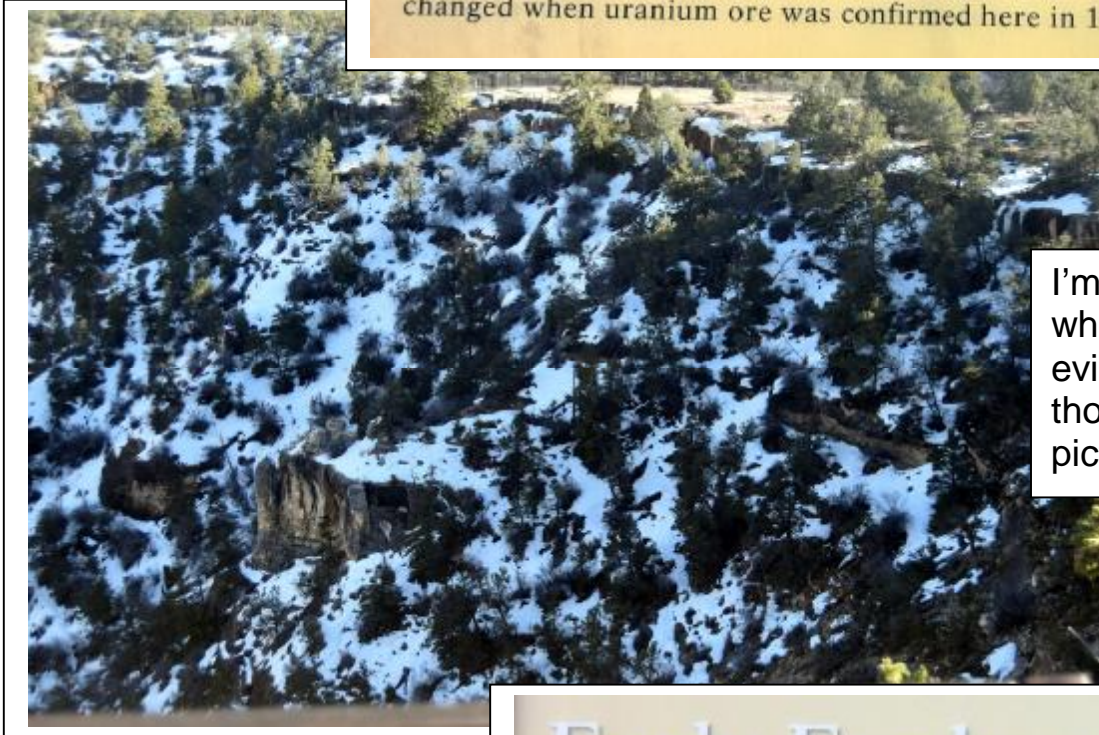


# Powell Point

## Orphan Mine

Something unexpected once stood on the rim in front of you. A steel headframe towered over a mineshaft that dropped 1,500 feet (460 m) to one of the richest uranium mines in the United States. From 1956 to 1969, miners extracted ton after ton of uranium ore from this 20-acre (8 ha) claim.

The mine goes back to 1891, when Dan Hogan—an orphan—discovered copper here. Hogan built a daring trail to his Orphan Mine Lode 1,100 feet (330 m) below you. He gave up mining in 1936 and built a lodge and trading post on the rim, which, in 1947, became Grand Canyon Inn. Business quickly changed when uranium ore was confirmed here in 1951.



I'm not exactly sure where the mine evidence is, but I thought I should take a picture of it.



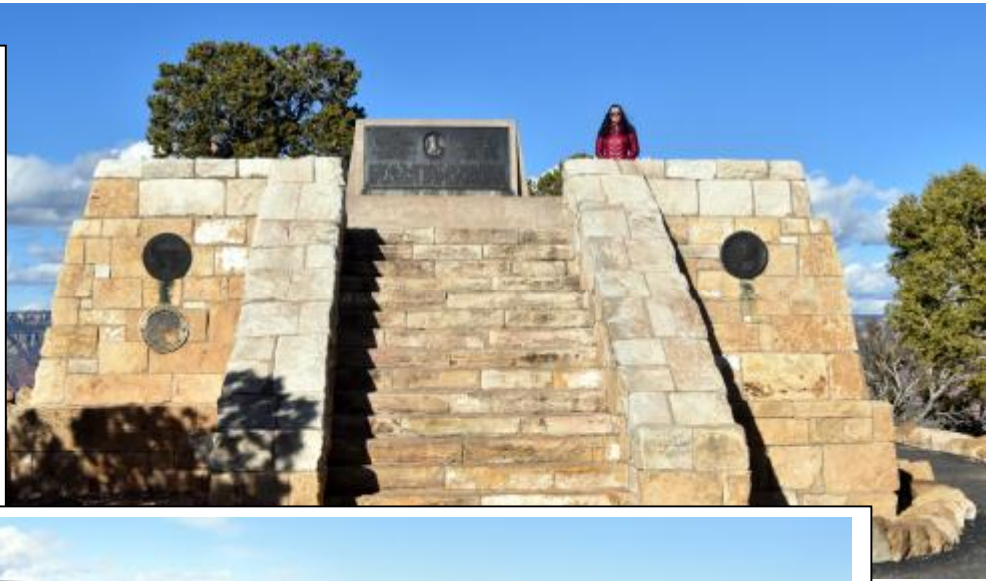
## Early Explorer

This monument honors Major John Wesley Powell, the leader of the first documented expedition through Grand Canyon. Imagine entering the depths of Grand Canyon down a roaring, not-yet-charted river, not knowing whether you will emerge. Because Powell's first expedition in 1869 was more survival than science, he led a second in 1871-1872, which gave America its first geologic glimpse of the canyon.

The names Frank Goodman, William Dunn, and brothers Oramel and Seneca Howland, 1869 expedition members, are missing from this 1912 monument. All were labeled "deserters"—though not by Powell—for leaving the voyage. Goodman left after the first major rapid in northern Utah. Dunn and the Howlands left just two days before the trip's end. They attempted to climb out of the canyon, but were never heard from again.

I did not realize until today that 2019 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Grand Canyon. Just random that I picked this year to visit.

You can't read the plaque below, but it pays tribute to Powell and his crews from both expeditions.



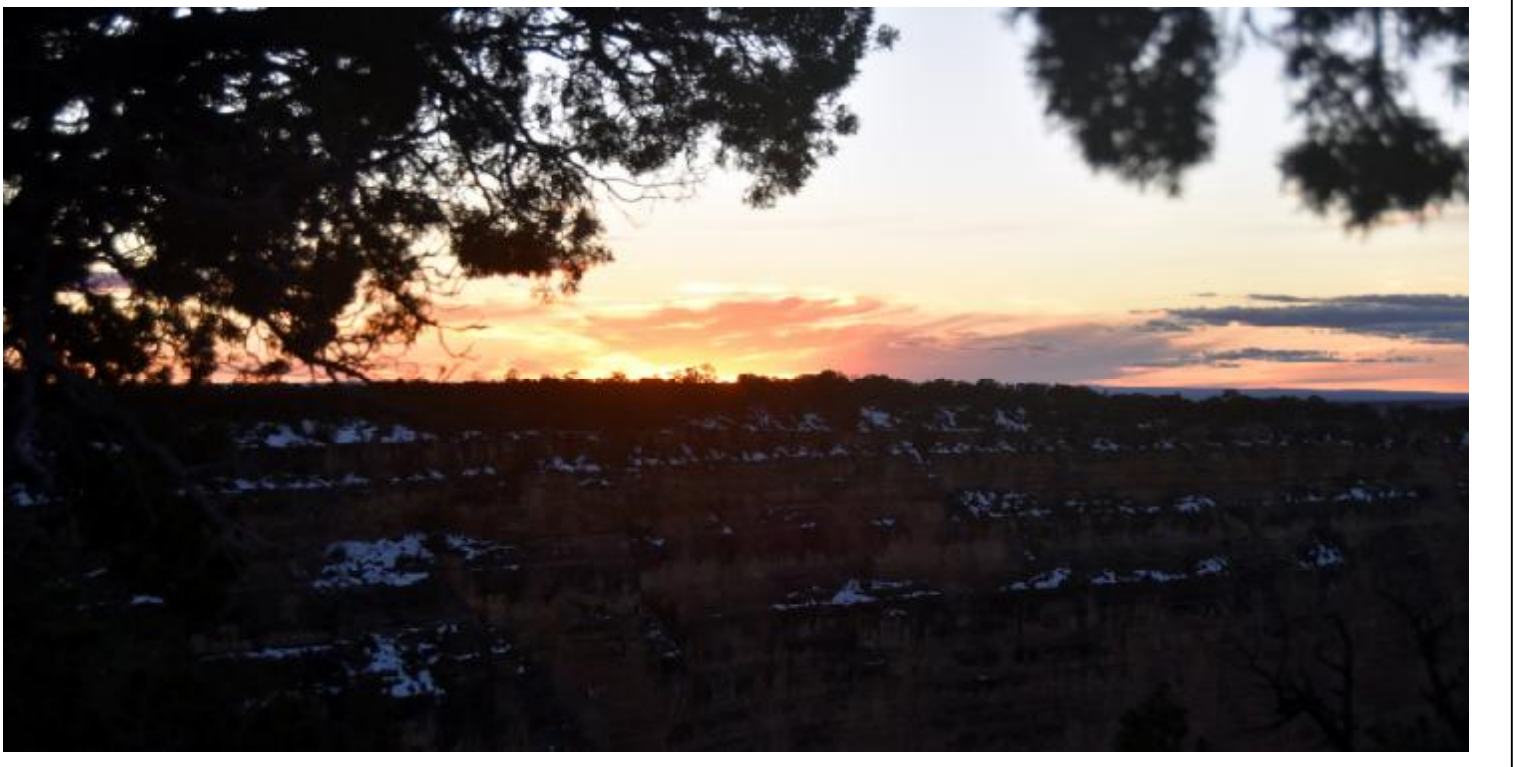


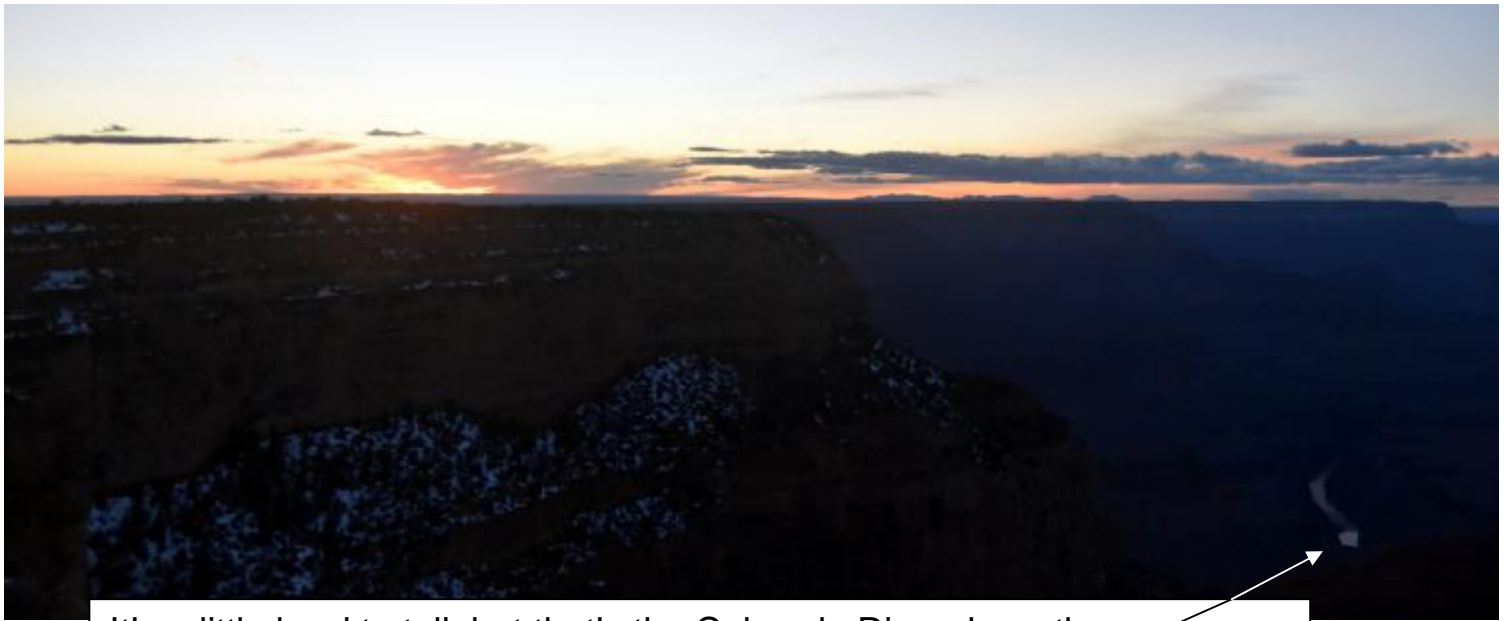
After Powell Point I started out again on the trail, but I realized there was now a fence between me and the canyon due to some work by the NPS, so I backtracked and caught the shuttle to the transfer point. It was a good thing I did too because I realized I didn't have enough time to take buses back to the RV, grab a warmer coat, headlamp and tripod and make it back to the transfer station in time to catch a bus to a good spot for some sunset photos over Grand Canyon. I just walked up to the Bright Angel Lodge and had dinner at the restaurant. There are many establishments that could take lessons from this place on how to treat customers and prepare food. All I had was a bacon cheeseburger and fries, but it was cooked perfect, the bacon was thick and tender, my water glass was refilled twice, and he didn't charge me for my chocolate milk. I could actually taste the meat and cheese instead of no flavor at all. I left a good tip and walked back to the transfer station to catch a bus.

On the morning bus ride Trey mentioned a spot a couple hundred yards past the normal sunset viewing overlook. I think I got off a stop too early. I didn't have the best location, but there were very few clouds in the sky anyway, so the sunset was only so-so.

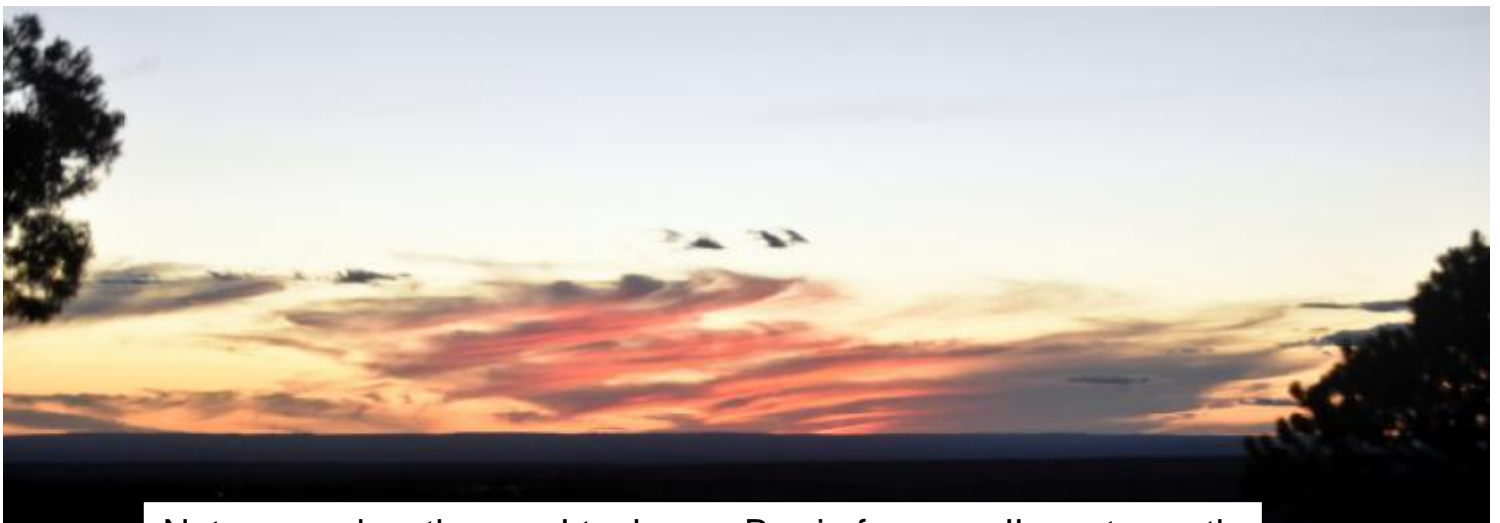


This one shows a little of the canyon wall





It's a little hard to tell, but that's the Colorado River down there



Not as good as the one I took over Bowie for sure. I'm not exactly sure what the attraction is for a sunset here at The Grand Canyon. The light does not infiltrate the canyon at all, so if it's just a flat horizon, I can get that back home in Wisconsin. I'd rather have some mountains to make things interesting.

I made my way via bus back to the campground and settled in to send you these pictures.

I had a great day!

I didn't miss the sunrise, I didn't lose the hiking pole, I found the wood blocks, I had a FANTASTIC hike along the 'real' rim (for which I was alone the first 2.5 miles), had an exceptional meal, saw the sunset, and shared it all with you guys. What more could I ask for?

Until next time.....