This passage of the Arizona Trail parallels the route of an old stagecoach line in many places, as it heads north toward the Coconino Rim. In the early days of Grand Canyon tourism, the Grand Canyon Stage Line operated a stagecoach service between Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon. Throughout the 1890’s, stagecoaches would depart Flagstaff in the morning, make several stops along the way to exchange horses, and arrive at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon by the end of the day. Grandview Point was the main Grand Canyon tourist destination at this time, and John Hance’s cabin or the Grandview Hotel at Grandview Point were the usual destinations. Fares averaged $20 one-way for passengers, and several stagecoach runs per week allowed them to stay overnight. Tourism was becoming a lucrative business at the Grand Canyon as time went on, and the Santa Fe Railroad took notice. In 1901, the Santa Fe completed the Grand Canyon Railroad to the South Rim of the Canyon, about ten miles west of Grandview Point. The fares and travel times were much less on the railroad, and before long the stagecoach line ceased operations as tourists flocked to the new railroad.

One of the stagecoach stops along the Grand Canyon Stage Line in this area was Red Horse Station. In 1902, after the stagecoach line had been abandoned, Grand Canyon tourism pioneer Ralph Cameron dismantled the old log cabin station, and reassembled it at Grand Canyon Village, where it became his Cameron Hotel. The construction of the Bright Angel Lodge in the 1930’s called for the demolition of the Cameron Hotel, but renowned Fred Harvey Company architect Mary Colton insisted upon saving it. The old station-turned-hotel was incorporated into the Bright Angel Lodge hotel complex, where it is still in use today as guest lodging.

Flagstaff’s Coconino Cycling Club held their first “Annual Run” to the Grand Canyon in 1894. Cyclists would ride from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon, following the rutted, dirt road used by the Grand Canyon Stage Line. Only four Annual Runs were held, with one featuring a race between cyclists and the stagecoach. One of the cyclists made it to the Grand Canyon in ten hours, while the stagecoach took twelve.

As it gently ascends into the forested hills south of the Coconino Rim, the Arizona Trail enters railroad country. Steam locomotive whistles once echoed through these pine forests, along the tracks of a long-forgotten logging railroad. In 1928, the Saginaw & Manistee lumber company of Williams, Arizona was granted a timber harvesting contract in the Kaibab National Forest, east of the present village of Tusayan. The lumber company had rails and cross ties delivered to a side track along the Grand Canyon Railroad known as Apex. From here, the Saginaw & Manistee built a network of railroad tracks east through the forests. Portable logging camps housed the company’s lumberjacks, and were moved as the loggers progressed from one area to another. All of the allotted timber was harvested by 1936, and the forests grew quiet again as the Saginaw & Manistee pulled up its tracks and sent its logging crews elsewhere. The Arizona Trail crosses the route of the old railroad in a few places.
After winding along the Coconino Rim for a few miles, this passage comes to an end near the historic Grandview fire tower. One of the many Civilian Conservation Corps projects completed at the Grand Canyon, the 80-foot-high Grandview Lookout Tower was constructed in 1936 to aid in fire suppression efforts in the area.

References


