DID YOU KNOW THAT A VILLAGE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GRAND CANYON EATS MOST OF ITS MAIL?

Or that one of America’s newest national park units was once so secret it used multiple undercover addresses?

Trailblazing: 100 Years of Our National Parks, a twenty-one-month exhibition at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, chronicles these and numerous other intersections between the mail and our national parks. Featuring original postage stamp art from the United States Postal Service and artifacts loaned by the National Park Service, Trailblazing explores the myriad and sometimes surprising ways that mail moves to, through, and from our national parks.

This gallery guide was designed to help you make the most of your visit to Trailblazing. Four bonus items are added to an extended Curator’s Trail, and there are directions to help you find related material on display in the museum’s other galleries. There is a complete list of all the National Park Service sites featured in the exhibition—how many can you find? The inside of your gallery guide folds out into a glorious souvenir exhibition poster!

Afterward, extend your experience by picking up one of the books listed in the For Further Reading section or visiting the exhibition’s companion website at http://postaluseum.si.edu/trailblazing. Blaze your own trail to one of our national parks using the resources found at http://findyourpark.com.
As the National Park Service approached its golden anniversary in 1966, the agency’s leadership took interest in updating its visual identity—what we today would call branding. They replaced or supplemented rustic structures designed by government architects in the 1930s with modernist buildings planned by professionals. The new parks style was known as “Mission 66,” and many examples are still in use today. (A typical Mission 66 structure is Petrified Forest National Park’s main entrance, shown in a photograph near the flagpole in the large exhibit gallery.)

The Interior Department also hired a noted New York graphic design firm to redesign the National Service’s arrowhead logo, which dated from 1931. When the new arrowheads and designs appeared on nearly 120 million postage stamps, many postal patrons and collectors mistakenly blamed the change for the disappearance of their mail. The stamp, many postal patrons and collectors mistakenly blamed the change for the disappearance of their mail.

In addition to carrying out military operations, the Army was faced with housing, feeding, and clothing the former slaves at a facility known as Freedmen’s Central Depot. Butler brought in women teachers to instruct the children in reading and writing, and men were trained in sentry duty, digging trenches, building field defenses such as pickets, and basic road and bridge construction.

The creation of Shenandoah National Park involved removing entire families and even towns from within the new park’s boundaries. Between 1927 and 1937, the Commonwealth of Virginia condemned and purchased land in eight counties and transferred it to the federal government for the park. Most residents went quietly, even willingly. The Virginia Piedmont was one of the country’s most productive agricultural regions, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owners were glad for the opportunity to farm and orchards, and owner...