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.

Smithsonian National Postal Museum
Next to Union Station
2 Massachusetts Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20003
Open daily 10 am to 5:30 pm
WWW.POSTALMUSEUM.SI.EDU/TRAILBLAZING

JUNE 9, 2016 through MARCH 25, 2018
SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM
WILLIAM H. GROSS STAMP GALLERY
WWW.POSTALMUSEUM.SI.EDU/TRAILBLAZING

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ALABAMA
Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site
Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site

ARIZONA
Grand Canyon National Park
Hopi Trading Post National Historic Site
Maricopa Indian National Monument

ARKANSAS
Hot Springs National Park

CALIFORNIA
Joshua Tree National Park
Manzanar National Historic Site
Yosemite National Park

COLORADO
Rocky Mountain National Park

FLORIDA
Everglades National Park

GEORGIA
Chattahoochee and Chattahoochee National Park

HAWAII
Hilo Volcanoes National Park

IDAHO
Hells Canyon National Historic Site

MAINE
Acadia National Park

MARYLAND
Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park

MICHIGAN
Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine

MASSACHUSETTS
Boston National Historical Park

MONTANA
Glacier National Park

NEBRASKA
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

NEW MEXICO
Blessington National Historical Park

NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY
Statue of Liberty National Monument

NORTH CAROLINA
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Cape Lookout National Seashore

OREGON
Cape Kiwanda National Park

PENNSYLVANIA
Eisenhower National Historic Site
Gettysburg National Military Park
Independence National Historical Park

PUERTO RICO
San Juan National Historic Site

SOUTH DAKOTA
Wolf Trap National Park

TEXAS
Big Bend National Park

UTAH
Natural Bridges National Monument

VIRGINIA
Colonial National Historical Park
Fort Necessity National Monument
George Washington Memorial Parkway
U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site

WYOMING
Devils Tower National Monument
Grand Tetons National Park
Yellowstone National Park

(Also partly in Montana and Idaho)
FIND THE FOLLOWING RELATED CONTENT ELSEWHERE IN THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM.

**ORIGINS OF OUR NATIONAL PARKS**

Learn more about Owyhee the Dog in Mail by Rail on Level 1.

**ANGEL ADAMS’S STAMP ALBUM**

Learn about more famous stamp collectors in Connect with U.S. Stamps on Level 2.

**TOURISM**

Learn about more revenue stamps in National Stamp Salon frames 176–186 on Level 2.

**THE NEW DEAL**

*Autographed National Parks Year Issue Imperforate Press Sheet.*

See more autographed National Parks Year Issue material, including a complete set of Farley’s Folio sheets, in National Stamp Salon frames 125–150 on Level 2.

**NATIONAL MONUMENTS**

*World War I Safe Return Postcard.*

See more mail from American wars in the Mail Call exhibition on Level 1.

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL N. F. PARRISH COVER**

See postal markings deciphered from the wreck of USS Oklahoma in the National Stamp Salon on Level 2 and the Mail Call exhibition on Level 1. See a piece of mail postmarked at Honolulu, Hawaii on December 7, 1941 in National Stamp Salon frame 168 on Level 2.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES**

*Cover Addressed to Tuskegee Institute.*


**NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARKS**

*Mission 66 Roof Truss.*

See an original “3 Free Franklin” letter from 1765 that inspired this postmark in National Stamp Salon frame 1 on Level 2.

**LIBERTY BELL CIVIL WAR PATRIOTIC COVER**

See more Civil War-era Union patriotic covers in National Stamp Salon frame 15 on Level 2.

**MINUTEMEN DORESE COVER**

See another Manhattan Project cover in National Stamp Salon frame 169 on Level 2.

**PARKS IN YOUR BACKYARD**

*Iwo Jima World War II Patriotic Cover.*

See more World War II patriotic covers in National Stamp Salon frame 170 on Level 2.

*3¢ Iwo Jima (Marines Issue) SIGNED BLOCK OF FOUR.*

See more of the Malcolm MacGregor collection of autographs on stamps in Stamps Around the Globe frames 76–85 on Level 2.

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 modernistic buildings planned by professionals. The new park style was known as “Mission 66,” and many examples are still in use today. (A typical Mission 66 structure is Petrillos House in Yosemite National Park, 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 Park Service’s arrowhead logo, which dated from 1931. When the new arrowhead and flagpole in the large exhibit gallery.)

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*Fort Monroe Union Naval Cover.*

1862

Fort Monroe’s significance as a national monument runs deeper than its history as the only Union fort during the American Civil War to be completely surrounded by Confederate territory. Early in the war the fort’s commander, Major General Benjamin Butler, decreed that escaped slaves reaching his headquarters would be considered “contraband of war” and freed. This decision, sometimes called the “contraband of war” decree, helped the outpost into a magnet for thousands of runaway slaves.

In addition to carrying out military operations, the Army was faced with housing, feeding, and clothing the former slaves at a facility known as Fort Monroe Contraband Camp. Butler brought in former 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.

Hot Springs National Park is one of the most distinctive National Park Service sites in the country. The smallest national park by area, it is also the only one located in a downtown area. Some sources contend that it is the oldest national park, too, because it was created in 1832—forty years before Yellowstone. However, Congress did not formally convert the Hot Springs Reservation (as it was then known) into a national park until 1921, so official National Park Service chronologies use that date. One thing that is not disputed, however, is that a post office has operated continuously at Hot Springs National Park since it was created in 1832, giving it one of the longest postal histories of any U.S. national park. Hiram A. Whittington, the first postmaster, operated the post office and general store out of what one early traveler described as “wretched-looking log cabin.” The Hot Springs post office was taken over by the Confederacy in June 1861 and functioned throughout the war, including a brief period from September 1862 when the city served as the Arkansas state capital.