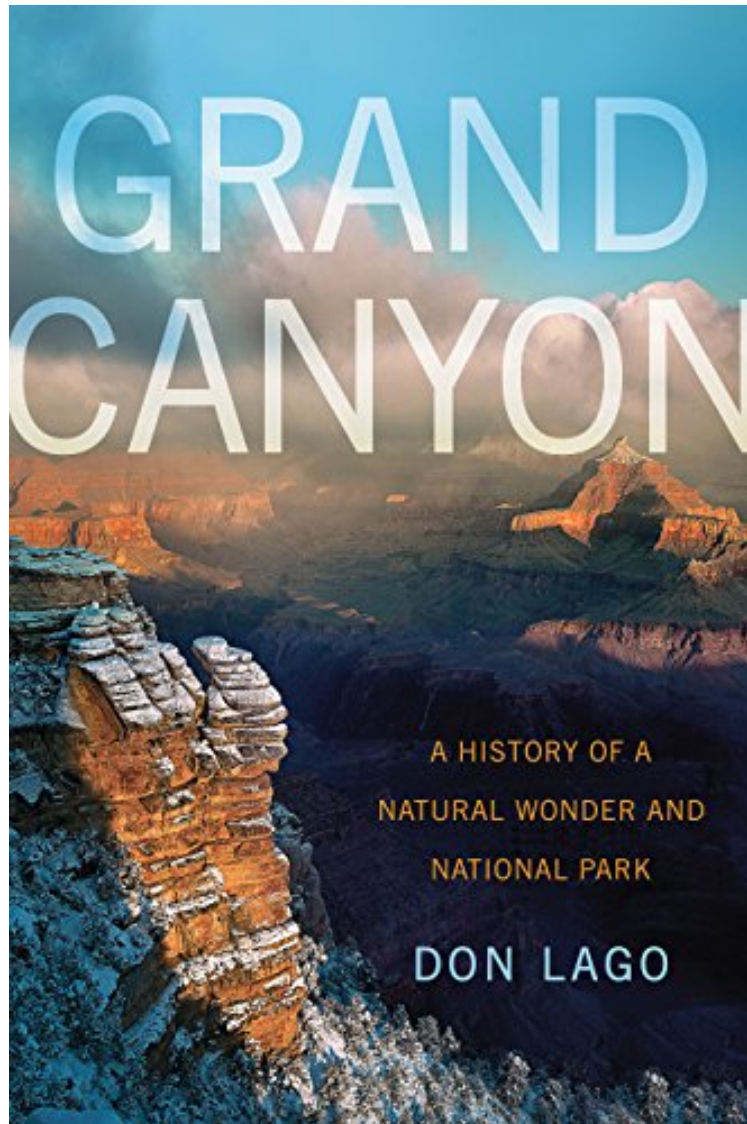


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Grand Canyon: A History of a Natural Wonder and National Park (America's National Parks)

Don Lago

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Don Lago : Grand Canyon: A History of a Natural Wonder and National Park (America's National Parks) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Grand Canyon: A History of a Natural Wonder and National Park (America's National Parks):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brief, but covers some geology, the long aboriginal era, exploration, the creation of the park and some of its problems.By lyndonbrechtThis book is better than four stars and not quite five,

but five seems fairer. It is the first of a series, which would be worth keeping an eye out for if you're interested in the national parks. This is not really a guide to the park in the usual sense. It doesn't have maps of where to go and suggestions for what to see when. It's mostly history of the park including the geology, but also how it developed gradually, into a national park. There are a lot of players, among whom are John Wesley Powell, Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and others. Lago takes the time to note that 98% of the human history of the Canyon has been Native American. One corporation is key: the Santa Fe Railroad early saw the potential for tourists to get to the park by train, and lobbied for creation of the park (although it for a time it opposed infrastructure for tourists coming by automobile). The railroad supported dozens of artists, says Lago, seeing in their paintings a usable form of publicity--certainly one of the more interesting techniques ever used by an American corporation. The words "Grand Canyon" have been traced to 1857. The book's first chapters--the most interesting, I think--are a kind of general intro, Native Americans who lived (and still live) in and around the Canyon, Explorers, then Exploiters, followed by Conservation, Culture, National Park and Architecture. The first four of these are the most informative. Voices for making the place a park started not long after Powell's 1869 expedition downriver (itself an epic) but also faced intense opposition by Arizonans not liking the idea of the feds controlling so much land and closing off opportunities for mining and other possible exploitation. Teddy Roosevelt created a de facto park but it was a considerable time before it became a park. Part of the book describes how the park's success almost suffocated it, with far more visitors than the tourist infrastructure was designed for. One interesting aspect in the chapter on architecture is the description of a woman architect, Mary Colter, whose work enriched the park over a good period of years, in a time when few women were architects (she didn't have a formal license because of discrimination, essentially). There are a few interesting photos, although the book would be enriched by more.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Overview of the Grand Canyon's History By Stewart Aitchison Don Lago does it again! He is an amazing researcher who ferrets out so many fascinating historical tidbits about the Grand Canyon. Plus he puts them all together in such a way that the reader gets the Big Historical Picture. If you can't have Don sitting at your campfire personally telling you intriguing human stories about the Grand Canyon, at least buy and read his book.

The Grand Canyon has long inspired deep emotions and responses. For the Native Americans who lived there, the canyon was home, full of sacred meanings. For the first European settlers to see it, the canyon drove them to great exploration adventures and Wild West dreams of wealth. The canyon also held deep importance for America's pioneer conservationists such as Teddy Roosevelt, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold, and it played a central role in the emerging environmental movement. The Grand Canyon became a microcosm of the history and evolving values of the National Park Service, long conflicted between encouraging tourism and protecting nature. Many vivid characters shaped the canyon's past. Its largest story is one of cultural history and changing American visions of the land. *Grand Canyon: A History of a Natural Wonder and National Park* is a mixture of great storytelling, unlikely characters, and important ideas. The book will appeal to both general readers and scholars interested in seeking a broader understanding of the canyon.

Once again, Don Lago has proven he is not only a great writer, but the best Grand Canyon historian of his time. Tom Myers, coauthor of *Grand Obsession: Harvey Burchart and the Exploration of Grand Canyon*