

The George W. Parkins Inscription: Now We Know Who He Was

By Jonathan Upchurch

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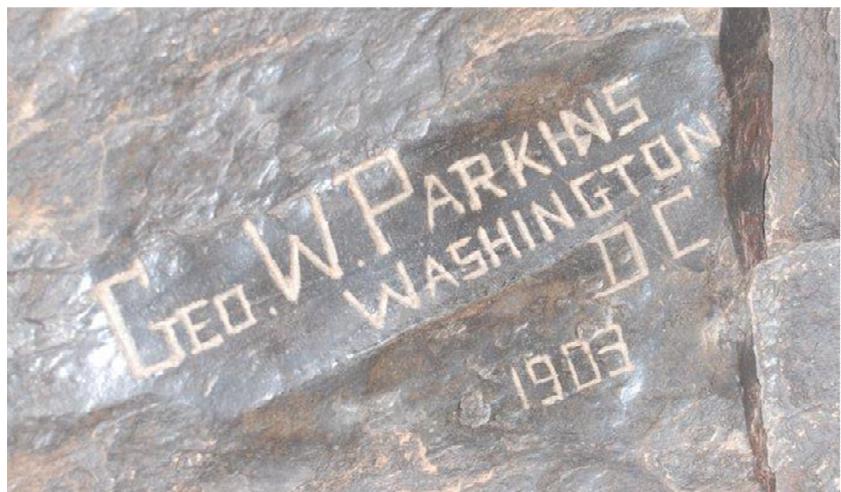
GEO. W. PARKINS WASHINGTON DC 1903. While there are several inscription names in the Grand Canyon, the Parkins Inscription may be the most mysterious. Many inscription names are historically known figures such as the following. F. W. Brown's name is just below Soap Creek Rapid (1889). The names of John Hance, L. D. Boucher and many others appear along Hance Creek (circa 1900). National Park Service ranger Ed Laws' name is located in Surprise Valley (1924).

George W. Parkins just isn't a historically known figure. Who was George Parkins? Why was George Parkins at Bass Rapids in 1903? These questions have tugged at river runners and backpackers for decades and the questions have gone unanswered.

The Parkins Inscription is located on the first beach below Bass Rapids, on river right at river mile 107.8. The inscription is exceptionally well done in very hard Vishnu Schist rock, and is about 12 inches by 6 inches in size. The inscription is immaculate and it clearly took time to create. One may wonder why Parkins spent so much time creating it and how he happened to have so much time available to do so. And then one more question pops up – for those who know of his other work. Why did he carve his name – a second inscription – at another location in Grand Canyon?

We now know most of the answers and quite a bit about George W. Parkins.

Admittedly, there wasn't much to go on to solve this mystery – just the three basic clues of a name, a place, and a date. But from those three clues, and a great deal of detective work, a story has emerged.



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