



# On The Rim: Looking For The Grand Canyon

*Mark Neumann*

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## **On The Rim: Looking For The Grand Canyon** Mark Neumann

A captivating look at the Grand Canyon as scenic wonder, theme park, national icon, and refuge.

Why do nearly five million people travel to the Grand Canyon each year? Mark Neumann answers this question with a book as compelling as the panoramic vistas of the canyon. In *On the Rim*, he describes how the Grand Canyon became an internationally renowned tourist attraction and cultural icon, and delves into the meanings the place holds for the individuals who live, work, and travel there.

Weaving history, ethnography, documentary photography, and autobiography, Neumann exposes the roots—the personal and social dimensions—of America's pursuit of leisure. He shows how people visiting the Grand Canyon create their own experiences, even while they are affected by one hundred years of social history and cultural expectations. *On the Rim* examines the lines between progress and nostalgia, science and spirituality, nature and culture, authenticity and mass production, and work and leisure—all of which crisscross the tourist experience.

To support his argument, Neumann uses evidence from tourist registers and Park Service records, first-person narratives, interviews, and scenes from television shows, Hollywood movies, and popular novels. Heavily illustrated with historical and contemporary photographs, the narrative shifts back and forth between early descriptions of the canyon and modern tourist stories, the past illuminating the present at every step.

From Albert Einstein's visit and the hunt for the fugitive Danny Horning to the everyday experiences of local Native Americans, park rangers, and vacationing families, Neumann reminds us that every trip to the Grand Canyon is a complex journey, fueled by shared expectations but always open to the possibility of surprise. *On the Rim* is a multilayered, nuanced study of the place and its many visitors.

Mark Neumann is associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of South Florida.

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