



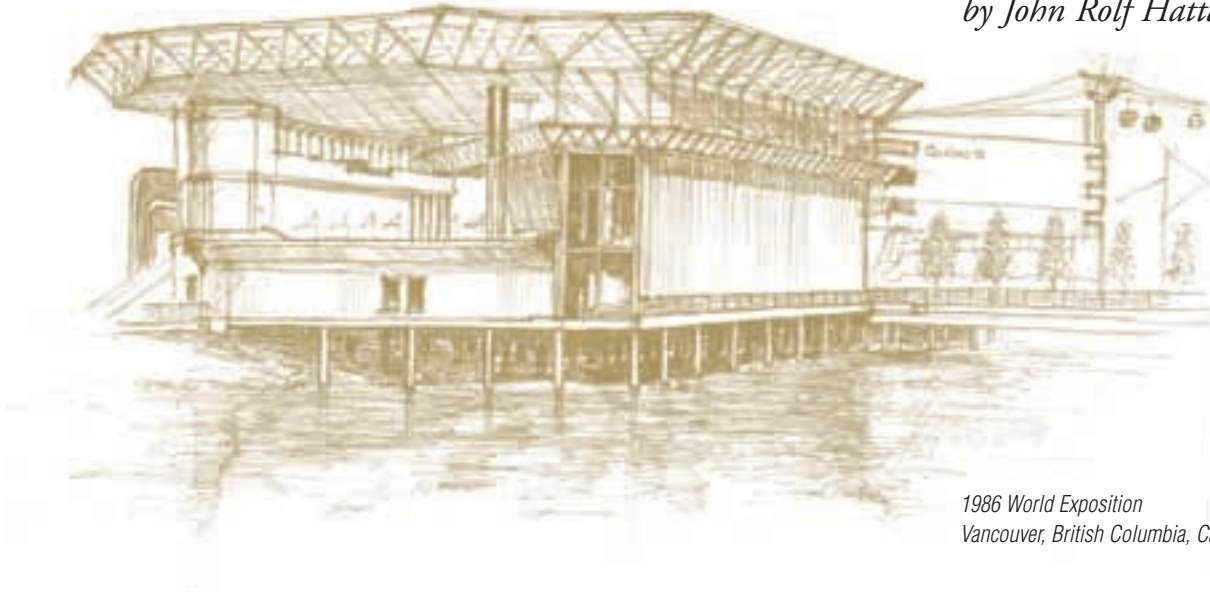
*Many Glacier Hotel
Glacier National Park, Montana*



*The Casino
Catalina Island, California*

National Parks FROM AN ARCHITECT'S SKETCHBOOK

by John Rolf Hattam



1986 World Exposition
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Our family's vacations over the past 30 years have most often had a national park or a state-side world's fair as our destination. Whenever possible, we took Amtrak and enjoyed a relaxed pace that offered time for sightseeing, games, reading, and designing the latest office project. Two favorite vacation spots, Glacier National Park and Yosemite, allowed us to take the train directly to their lodges.

During family travels, in addition to the usual tourist photos, I recorded a few visual expressions in pen and ink. An unusual experience resulted. For the amateur photographer, a quick click and the subject matter soon becomes a distant memory. But I noticed an hour or two of sketching the same scene creates a mental image that can last many years.

The earliest formal school of architecture existed in France about 1797 and was called "l'École de Beaux Arts." In the U.S., it took many years before schools for architects' training

were established, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology creating the first one in 1865. The early U.S. schools followed the French system.

In these schools, sketching in various media was taught and graduates who could afford it were encouraged to sail to Europe and roam from antiquity remnant to another, sketching and recording the results of history's architectural accomplishments. This emphasis on sketching and painting produced generations of American architects with exceptional graphic talent. Unfortunately, the computer has



Tower Falls
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

replaced virtually all emphasis on freehand drawing in most schools of architecture.

An interest in drawing afflicted me early on. While in architectural school, classes in life drawing, rendering in pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor only served to heighten my interest. Like other

amateur sketchers, my drawings are for the challenge and pleasure of the effort. But the last four or five centuries have produced more serious sketch artists of outstanding talent who, in the absence of photography, have given us a record of structures and cultures now disappeared, performing a unique service to history.

England produced an amazing number of sketching geniuses during the development and maturation of the Empire. They traveled throughout Europe, the Middle and Far East, accurately recording what remained of centuries of meaningful architectural work. Although today we deplore the destruction of historic buildings in order to build anew, this practice went on for millennia. The English

writer and artist, John Ruskin, attempted to record classical Venetian architecture in meticulously accurate drawings before its disappearance. In one letter to his father in 1845 he wrote, "What an unhappy day I spent yesterday before the Casa de Oro vainly attempting to draw it while the workmen were hammering it down before my face."

Another English artist-architect, Frederick Catherwood, sketched his way through Greece, Egypt, and surrounding areas in the 1820s. His work was absolutely brilliant. He is most significant to Americans due to his association with John Lloyd Stevens, an American businessman and explorer considered to be "the father of American archeology."

The pair met in London and in 1839 sailed for Central America. Over the next few years the two, clearing centuries of overgrowth as they walked, uncovered one Mayan ruin after another, the first westerners to discover this civilization. Frederick Catherwood, through bouts of severe illness and hardship, measured and drew the most magnificent drawings of Mayan architecture, photograph-like in their accuracy, leaving us a record of structures since deteriorated.

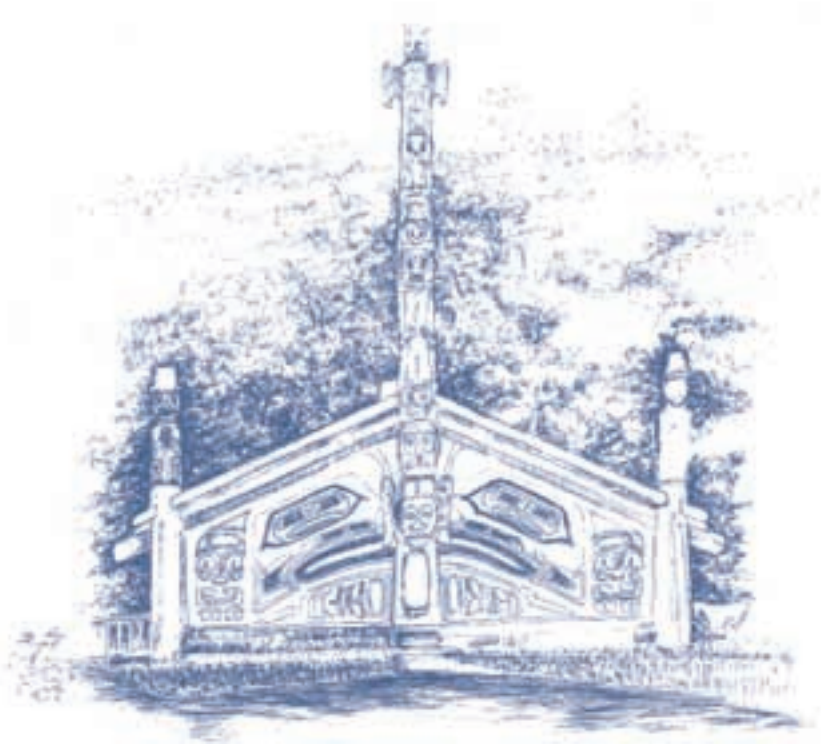
Again, we have artists to thank for recording Native American life in the early and mid-1800s. Drawings in pencil and watercolors by Karl Bodmer, Alfred J. Miller, George Catlin, and Frederick Remington are examples.



*Half Dome
Yosemite National Park, California*

American artist Thomas Moran traveled the frontier in the 1870s and 1880s executing stunning watercolors of what became many of the West's national parks. Works of these artists are in museums throughout the country.

All of these early graphic historians left families for months and years, traveled on foot or horseback, worked under severe circumstances, often while sick, and frequently had to pack up their sketch pads and run for their lives. Their sacrifices and passion for excellence are an ongoing inspiration for me.



*Totem Bight
Native Meeting Center, Ketchikan, Alaska*



*Seven Sacred Pools
Halea Kala National Park, Maui, Hawaii*

For information on Mr. Hattam's *National Parks from an Architect's Sketchbook* to be published in Fall 2002, please call (510) 841-5933 or fax your request to (510) 841-5955.