

## The Story of Tolchaco A Mission for the Navajos 1900-1918

On Saturday, May 17, a nice group of Society members were treated to a lively and informative



tour of two special exhibits at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff.

Bob Tallarovic was the docent who enthusiastically related to us the story of Tolchaco... the Padre Canyon Incident.

It seems that two cattlemen in November 1899 were out looking for stolen horses. William Montgomery and William Rodun roughed up two Navajo riders who may have had or known something about the missing horses. Sure that they were hot on the right trail, the two Williams returned to Flagstaff for a warrant and posse consisting of a deputy sheriff and three other men.

Galloping back out to the area near Padre Canyon, these men came upon a Navajo hunting camp. The warrant was read aloud in English, which none of the Navajos present understood. All mayhem ensued when the posse rushed for the Navajos' rifles. In the melee, Montgomery was killed, as well as the son and nephew of Begwo Etten. Etten was an old Navajo leader who was critically wounded in the fight. Atakai Tsosi was another Navajo wounded. The men scattered -- the Anglos back to Flagstaff to set that town of 2,000 on edge, sure that a major Navajo attack was eminent.

*...continued on page 3*

## GCPS Outings for 2003

**June 7: Annual Picnic at Grand Canyon South Rim, Shoshone Point.** The Annual Grand Canyon Historical Society Picnic at Shoshone Point is one of the highlights of the year. This year an added attraction may be Condors enjoying the Spring weather and soaring above the area checking out the picnic.

The Annual Picnic is a time for: • Long-time Society members and new members to gather and renew or start friendships. • A representative of the Park Service to give us an update of projects and activities. • The presentation of the Pioneer Award and the Public service awards.

Please plan to attend - enjoy the fellowship, an opportunity to have an unobstructed view of the Canyon, check out the Condors and, of course, eat. (See page 2 for directions.)

**July 4-5: North Rim Camp Out** at the old Jacob Lake Ranger Station. Plan for a barbeque on Friday evening and presentations on Saturday by representatives of the Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument, and North Kaibab Ranger District. (See page 2 for directions.)

**August 16: Annual Cemetery Cleanup.** The Grand Canyon Historical Society along with the Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association will clean up the cemetery at the Grand Canyon South Rim. Bring gloves, hat and bag lunch.

**September:** "Anita Mine and the Railroad History" by Al Richmond at Anita Mine.

**October:** Board Meeting and slide presentation in Flagstaff.

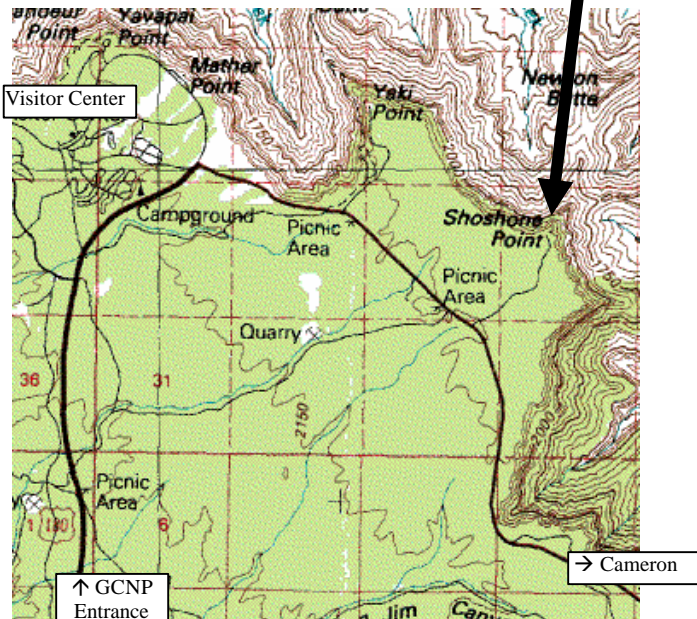
**November:** Phoenix (museum or other).

**December:** No meeting

## Annual Picnic: June 7

Join the Pioneers for the biggest event of the year at the Annual Picnic on June 7. The picnic will be at Shoshone Point (but, if it is moved, a notice will be posted at the entrance station and at Shoshone Point gate).

To get to Shoshone Point from the main entrance, take the East Rim Drive, continue east about 1.5 miles beyond the road to Yaki Point, and turn left into a parking area and look for the yellow gate, which will be unlocked by 11:00 AM.



Everyone should bring:

- a dish to share (i.e. casserole or desert),
- their own drinks,
- individual table service
- and, if desired, some meat to barbecue.

Table cloths and briquettes for the barbecue will be provided. The fire will be ready by 12:00 Noon (if no fire restrictions).

## Letter to the Editor

Hello,

I have a group of letters from the El Tovar Hotel written between 1914 and 1930 (approx) by someone named Grace to her mother, "Lettie Watkins". Grace seems to be in charge of selling artwork at the Art Room and mentions meeting many famous visitors. Because no husband is mentioned, I presume she is not Grace Moon. Do you know anything about who this could be?

Lorraine Beitz  
Ontario, Canada

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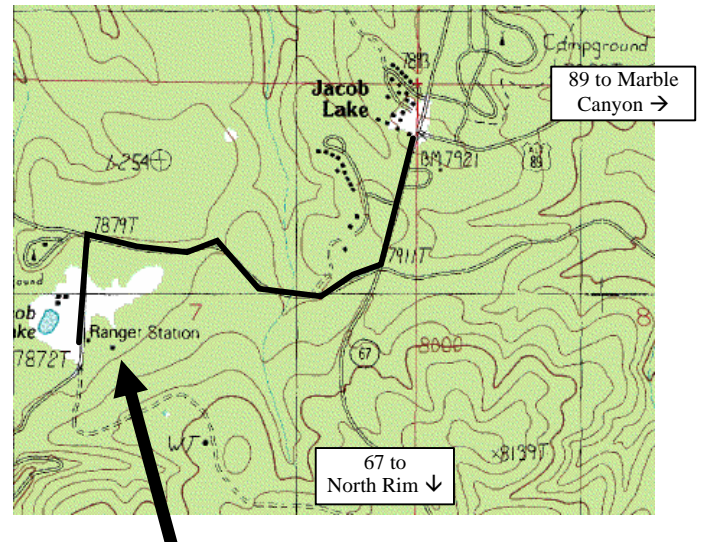
[Editor's note: If you have information but don't have email, please mail to GCHS, PO Box 10067, Prescott AZ 86304 and it will be forwarded to Lorraine via email.]

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## Camp Out: July 4-5

This year, spend Independence Day sharing the history of Grand Canyon with fellow GCHS members at the North Rim Camp Out at the old Jacob Lake Ranger Station on Friday night and Saturday.

Plan for a barbecue on Friday evening and presentations on Saturday by representatives of the Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument, and North Kaibab Ranger District.



From Jacob Lake Inn, go south on Hwy 67 and turn west on FS 462, continue south on FS 462. The old Ranger Station is on the east side.



## Tolchaco ...continued from page 1

Meanwhile, Missionary William Johnston came upon the frightened and confused band of Navajos. Johnston was a known entity, as he had been wandering the area looking for a place to establish a mission. After gathering as much information as he could from the Navajos, who were sure a major military assault from Flagstaff was eminent, Johnston rode into town to try to figure this all out. Johnston continued to act as intermediary, getting the Navajos involved in the fight to agree to sand trial, and helping to stand down further battles.

In September 1900, the trial was held in Flagstaff. The jury was made up of ranchers, businessmen and lumbermen. The presiding judge was Richard Sloan, who had the longest held judgeship in the Arizona Territory. Incredibly, the Navajo men were all found innocent and set free. Johnston was so respected by the Navajos that he was invited to set up his mission by the Little Colorado River near present day Leupp. He named it Tolcaco (pronounced with a long A, not like Chaco Canyon). Tolcaco means Muddy Water in Navajo.

Margaret Wray Johnston was a homeopathic healer and was thought of as a medicine woman by the Navajos. She made more converts to medicine than her husband ever did trying to convert Navajo souls to Christianity. However, Johnston continued to influence history by being a staunch ally of the Navajos.

When ranchers began encroaching on Navajo land, Johnston and his son Philip, then age 9, toured the area to find out how long the Navajo people had lived there. Philip acted as translator. Johnston then went to Washington to get President Theodore Roosevelt to issue an executive order to extend the reservation, known as Leupp Extension. This was established in 1901, making Leupp Chapter House the oldest on the reservation.

But the Johnston story doesn't end there. Philip eventually grew up and left the mission (which was abandoned in 1918 after a devastating fire). Philip went on to become an engineer for the city of Los Angeles. He kept returning to the part of Arizona he loved so well and to visit his friends among the Navajos. When World War II broke out and the Japanese kept breaking every code, it was Philip Johnson (who first made his mark in history at the age of 9 translating for Navajo tribal leaders in front of Teddy Roosevelt) who suggested to the Marine Corps to try using Navajo in front lines against the Japanese. The rest is history!

The Grand Canyon connection to this exhibit was a 1913 photograph taken by Emery Kolb of Theodore Roosevelt attending a Hopi Dance at Walpi with the Johnstons. The entire collection of photographs, some sepia and some black and white, helped to make the obscure but pivotal moment in history come alive for our audience.

We then switched gear significantly and went back a little further in history to the mid to late Cretaceous period. This was so we could view:  
**Plesiosaur –Terror of the Cretaceous Sea**

First we were introduced to a part of the skull of a mosasaur – a marine predator related to modern monitor lizards and snakes, which lived concurrently with plesiosaur. Then we heard about a 1999 discovery by amateur paleontologists Merle Graffam and David Rankin near Big Water, Utah. They called in MNA experts, who petitioned the National Park Service for permission to excavate. What emerged was an impressive portion of skeletal remains, as well as this significant find of the skull. This 25 to 40 foot creature had 4 limbs, similar to today's sea turtles. Within each limb were 5 phalanges, similar to our fingers, but a lot longer with numerous knuckles. This air breathing marine reptile had stomach grinding stones, which meant its incredible pointy teeth weren't used for much chewing, but rather holding and tearing its prey. Crocodiles, turtles and sharks were all living at this same time.

This several ton creature on display is a short-neck variety, but there are people in Scotland who believe that the long-neck variety exists to this day. Ever hear of the Loch Ness monster?

[Article submitted by Nancy Green]

## May Outing Attendance

Another beautiful Spring day in Flagstaff as the Society's members enjoyed two nice talks by Bob Tallarovic at the Museum of Northern Arizona.



A picnic in the shade of the pines was enjoyed after the tours. We were glad to see Bill and Sibyl Suran, Bev Loomis, Don Lago (all from Flagstaff area), Nancy and Keith Green (from Grand Canyon), Harvey Leake (from Prescott), and Steve Owen (who came all the way from Chandler to enjoy some cool temperatures).

## Our Sympathies to the Families and Friends of...

### Bernice Seeberg Meadows

Bernice Meadows, 73, of Kingman passed away Thursday, April 24, at Kingman Regional Medical Center. A second-generation Harvey Girl, Mrs. Meadows was born August 6, 1929, at Grand Canyon and came to Kingman in 1967.

Bernice lived not only in Arizona but also, a result of her husband's service in the U.S. Air force, in Florida, the Philippine Islands and Montana. At Grand Canyon, she worked for the Fred Harvey Co. in the Bright Angel Lodge as well as at the El Tovar Hotel. She was also employed by Verkamps Curios and by Kolb Brothers Studio in Grand Canyon. She worked in Kingman as a telephone operator, bookkeeper and bank teller. Before being disabled by severe rheumatoid arthritis, Bernice enjoyed square dancing, traveling and crafts. While disability robbed her of these pleasures, she never lost her love of family and friends or the fun of a good story, whether she was telling it or listening to it.

*[Source: Kingman Daily Miner]*

*Editor's Note: Bernice was at the 2001 Annual Picnic and eagerly shared her Harvey Girl stories with us.*

### Helen Smolenski Steck

Helen Steck, age 74, died at home early in the morning on May 15 after a short sudden increase of what had been a long multi-year period of decline.

Besides family, she has also been surrounded by a vast extended family of people whom she affected in one way or another. She had an enormous amount of love that she needed to share. She also adjusted to the chronic nature of her long illness. If you asked her how she was doing, her reply would be: "I'm doing better today." Sometimes it was: "I am much better today." George said he always wanted her tombstone to reflect her spirit by putting I AM BETTER TODAY on it.

She will be so sorely missed, because she was such a positive and loving person.

*[Source: Albuquerque Journal]*

*Editor's Note: Several of us recently met Helen when she attended the March outing at Marble Canyon, along with her husband George.*

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**Outings/Programs:** If you have a suggestion for a future outing/program or a question about an upcoming event, contact the **2003 Outings Coordinator:** John Azar, PO Box 1121, Fredonia AZ 86022; phone 928-643-6423; email: TontoWalk@msn.com.

**The Bulletin** welcomes comments, stories, or reflections and remembrances. Please send them to Diane Cassidy at 2112 Demerse Avenue, Prescott, AZ 86301; email: Pioneers@GrandCanyonHistory.org.

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Grand Canyon Historical Society

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