

Grand Canyon Historical Society, Inc.

To develop and promote appreciation, understanding and education of the earlier history of the inhabitants and important events of the Grand Canyon and surrounding area.

The Bulletin

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August 2005

Jacob Lake Outing

Ryan Smelter: A caravan of GCHS Members and Guests left the Jacob Lake Historic Ranger Station around 1:00 PM. We headed west on FR 461 (about 4 miles) then continued west of FR 462 (about 3 miles) and then north on FR 422 a short distance. Across the canyon we could see the Ryan Smelter. The Ryan Smelter was built around 1901 and processed ore – primarily copper – that had been mined in the area. The group walked down into the canyon and followed a roadbed to the north. The roadbed may have been for a narrow gage railroad to haul ore to the smelter, or the roadbed of the original FR 422 alignment (highway from Fredonia to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon). There were no visible drainage structures across the roadbed.



Mike Coltrin checks the interior of the storage building while Mary Simpson and Gene Fowler stand by.

Two block structures were located that were part of the Ryan Smelter operation. The structures were of sound construction, concrete roof, and steel door for access. The structures showed little deterioration after 100 + years. The block work reflected the work of skilled craftsman. The structures were probably used to store chemicals and dynamite used in the Ryan Smelter operation.

The group then walked to the south and the location of a block building. The block building walls were intact but the roof (wooded structure) had fallen in. This structure could have been part of the grinding operation for a 100-ton blast furnace was housed. The Ryan Smelter operation produced \$25,000 worth of ore in 1929 (over \$300,000 in today's dollars). An increased demand of copper during WW II resulted in continued activity at the Smelter. Transportation problems,

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2005 Outings

August 20 - Community Service Project at the Grand Canyon NPS Library.

We will assist Librarian Susan Eubank with barcoding the entire book collection, which entails one group that will be physically putting barcodes on books and another group that will be entering those barcodes into the computer. We might also put labels on the books, if necessary.

Time: 9:00 AM
Place: GCNP Library

We will meet Susan at the Grand Canyon National Park Library in the Park Headquarters building. (If you come in the park by Mather Point, take a right at the intersection where the left-hand turn would take you to the store and post office. Parking is in front of the Shrine of the Ages.) Lunch will be provided.

Please RSVP to Nancy Green at 928-638-0666 or kngreen4@msn.com so that they can plan lunch.

September 17 – Mountain Lying Down: An Environmental History of the Kaibab Plateau by Steve Buckley. Buckley is the 2003 Scholarship recipient for his master's thesis project: *Mountain Lying Down: An Environmental History of the Kaibab Plateau*. This is our first award for an environmental history. His introduction to the application was "Presently, there is no environmental history of the Kaibab Plateau. The isolated geologic upwarp, which serves as the northern barrier to the Grand Canyon between Kanab Canyon and Marble Canyon, is a true sky island. This breadth of land mass has provided for a rich history of human use. From early archeological evidence and inferences from known patterns, human habitation has had an effect on the larger ecological system of the Kaibab. The famous Kaibab deer herd and the ecological lesson it taught concerning the extirpation of predators, is but one remarkable note from a complex past. The Kaibab, as it is known, is a derivative of the original Paiute word, kaibabits, meaning *mountain lying down*. The name was given by Major John Wesley Powell in the course of his exploration in the 1870s. Until such time it had been commonly known as Buckskin Mountain. It is the ecological story of this mountain I wish to tell." Presentation at 1:00 PM in Screening Room A in the NAU Cline Library in Flagstaff. For those arriving early, you may find some members gathering at 11:30 AM for lunch at Busters Restaurant. [Mike Coltrin, event coordinator]

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weather, and the fluctuation price of cooper eventually resulted in mining operations on the Kaibab Plateau to be unprofitable in the long run.

It could have been a different story if the John Wesley Powell's packers had noticed a "lot of color" in the sand at the mouth of Kanab Creek – they just noticed a "little color." Miners arrived to make their fortune, but left because the gold was too fine to mine and be profitable. If it had been profitable, the North Kaibab Plateau would be dotted with mines, smelters, railroad beds, towns, and extensive road and communication systems.



This day the GCHS group talked about the life and times of the Ryan Smelter, the evidence of craftsmen and their work (wood, block, and metal), and the beauty of the plateau.

The caravan turned around on FR 422 then left on FR 212 traveling in an easterly direction towards 67 (the paved route between Jacob Lake and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon).

Three Lakes Cabin: The next stop was the Three Lakes Cabin. The restoration of the cabin started in the 1990s. The roof structure had fallen in and the sill logs had deteriorated beyond repair. Excavation on the inside and outside of the sill logs was required to build a new sill using stone and concrete. New floor logs and floor were required. New roof trusses and a new roof were added. Archeology efforts included recovering artifacts. Little evidence of early activity and occupancy of the cabin were found.



Ann Reynolds, Mary Simpson and Mike Coltrin enter the Three Lakes cabin, while Nancy Green and her dog, Keetna, go down to one of the lakes.

There is a large sinkhole just west of the cabin. Sinkholes are common on the North Kaibab Plateau. The limestone bedrock retains the water with little seepage. Water was present during the dry 1991 time frame, indicating the sinkhole served as a source of water for the early Indians, miners, game animals, and livestock. A "tripod" type fence was constructed around the sinkhole. Sections of the original fence have been repaired and a new fence (2004 and 2005) has been constructed around the cabin.

Mary Simpson, Julia Holland, Ann Reynolds and Gene Fowler study the interior of Three Lakes cabin.



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The history of the cabin construction, owners and occupants is sketchy. The construction of the cabin probably occurred around 1900. Tree-ring samples from the cabin logs, fading memories and stories, and artifacts have not provided a date, or time frame, when the cabin was constructed.

The cabin may have been built as a line shack by Grand Canyon Cattle Company in the 1880s. The cabin may have been used as a salt storage house. Local residents said the foreman of the B. F. Sanders cattle outfit, Charles Dimmick, built the cabin about 1910. A team of trappers may have used the cabin in the 1930s, presumably when the Forest Service was trying to reduce the mule deer population on the North Kaibab. The western movie, *Wild Bill Hickock*, starring Bill Elliot was filmed at the cabin in 1935. The Arizona Fish and Game took control of the property – sinkhole and cabin – in the 1950s. The G&F wanted to turn the lake into a fishing area. Squatters, backpackers and campers, hunters, possibly fugitives, and individuals on snow mobiles have probably sought shelter at the Three Lakes Cabin.

Forest Road 217: The sign, "Fredonia Third Grade, May 20 1987" was erected in a small clearing surrounded by the tall pines. That must have been an interesting outing for the third graders. Continuing northeast on FR 217, the caravan stopped at a large and deep sinkhole. There is no outlet and some water was visible. The caravan made it to 67 and then traveling north to the Jacob Lake store. Some felt this was a mandatory stop for ice cream and cookies.

Chicken Enchiladas: While the GCHS members and guests were traveling and visiting the historical sites south and west of the Jacob Lake Ranger Station, John Azar was preparing the main meal for the day - chicken enchiladas cooked in a Dutch oven. The salads, deserts, fruits, and drinks were provided by others in the group. It was a good time sharing Grand Canyon stories during the meal.

Chef John did an outstanding job of preparing the meal. During dinner, John told many stories about the restoration projects, reaching agreement with the Forest Service on restoration issues, and obtaining and reusing material.

The Greatest Good: After dinner John showed the DVD movie, *The Greatest Good*, in the Jacob Lake Ranger Station barn. John and a crew had been restoring the barn during the summer of 2005. This was an ideal location to show the two-hour documentary about the 100-year effort to find a balance between conservation, preservation, and utilization of the nation's forests. Rarely seen footage and photos and dozens of interviews were used to tell the *complex* story of the U. S. Forest Service and the effort to conserve the disappearing natural resources and to maximize the benefits from those resources.

Restored Jacob Lake Ranger Station and Barn: During the last few years, the Jacob Lake Ranger Station and barn have been undergoing restoration. John Azar has directed this effort. He has obtained grants and funding for the restoration effort, worked with the Forest Service to assure the restoration returns these structures to their

(nearly) original condition and that the buildings are structurally sound for use. Talks by Forest Service rangers, GCHS outings, school field trips and use by other groups will put these restored buildings to good use.

Epilogue: This Grand Canyon Historical Society outing, July 16, 2005, was a most rewarding day for the GCHS members and guests. Visiting historical sites on the North Kaibab Plateau (one can only assume John's next restoration project could/would be the Ryan Smelter!), a scrutiny of the craftsmanship by the individuals who built cabins and fences (no electricity and power tools, and no Home Depot to obtain needed materials!), speculation of how buildings were used (did the block buildings store dynamite or ice), and fellowship with those in attendance (including one large dog and one small dog) contributed to an outstanding outing. Thanks, John – as usual, a job well done.

[Article submitted by Lee Albertson;
photos by Diane Cassidy]



GCHS members overlooking sinkhole off FR217.

[Photo by Lee Albertson]

July Outing Attendees

Despite a late afternoon shower on Friday, the warm temperatures, and the smoke from Park fires (started in June), these pioneers enjoyed the Jacob Lake area:

Mary & Robert Simpson – Flagstaff
Keith & Nancy Green – Grand Canyon
Gene Fowler – Flagstaff
Doc Thomas & Julia Holland – Wickenburg
Mike Coltrin – Tucson
Ann Reynolds – Prescott
Diane Cassidy – Prescott
Lee Albertson – Tempe
John Azar – Fredonia

October 15 – Annual Board Meeting. The annual board meeting of the GCHS will be held at the Flagstaff Public Library meeting room from 10:15 AM to 12:15 PM. Following the meeting, if you are interested in visiting with members, we will walk or drive one block to Las Mananitas Downtown Restaurant at 103 West Birch Avenue. [Mike Coltrin, event coordinator]

November 19 – 100th Anniversary of the USFS by Cathie Schmidlin of the Williams office of the Kaibab Forest Service. Cathie will be discussing the USFS and how it relates to Grand Canyon history at 1:00 PM in the Cline Library Media Center, Viewing Room A, at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. (If you get to Flagstaff early, you may find some early-bird GCHS members at Busters Restaurant at 11:30 AM). [Nancy Green, event coordinator]

December – No meeting

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Future Outings

2006 – June 24: Annual Picnic at Shoshone Point. Reservations have already been made for Shoshone Point for 2006. Mark your calendar for the 2006 annual picnic.

2007 – January 26-27-28 (tentative): Grand Canyon History Symposium II. The GCHS History Symposium Committee (Steve Verkamp, Todd Berger, Lee Albertson, Jim Ohlman, Carolyn Castleman, Nancy Green, and Keith Green) have decided to format the second history symposium much like that of the 2002 Grand Canyon History Symposium. Look for more details in the coming months. In the meantime, they are working to raise money to help pay for it. Please contact any of the committee members with your comments and suggestions.

The Directors continue to build and guide the organization. The strengths of the organization are worth repeating; they are: monthly outings, community service projects, *The Bulletin* – monthly newsletter, *The Ol' Pioneer* – quarterly magazine, Pioneer Award – presented at the annual picnic, scholarship of \$1,000 to a student at NAU doing research on Colorado Plateau issues, and collection of historical and significant documents to be housed at the NAU Cline Library – Special Collections.

Do you love the Grand Canyon? Do you think the Historical Society is a worthwhile organization? During the next year, which will have 8,760 hours, do you think you can find a few hours, say 6 to 8 hours to devote to the Grand Canyon? If the answer is yes to any or all of these questions, then you are a candidate for the Board of Directors of GCHS.

What is your excuse? You are a new member of the Historical Society...wonderful! A Pioneer is someone who has never done this but has the courage to try. You are a very busy person...great! As the "old saw" goes, give the job to the busiest person and they will get it done. "I have been there and done that for years"... fabulous! Your experience is invaluable.

If you somehow, suddenly find yourself somewhat short of excuses, you are a great candidate for the Board of Directors of the GCHS... don't hesitate. Please call or write Keith Green for more information and to "sign up"!

928-638-0666
KNGREEN4@MSN.com

Outings/Programs: If you have a suggestion for a future outing/program or a question about an upcoming event, contact the **2005 Outings Coordinator:** Mike Coltrin, 2041 West Brichta Drive, Tucson AZ 85745; phone: 520-624-1831; email: Coltrin1@cox.net.

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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