

The Ol' Pioneer

The Quarterly Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

VOL. 15 - NO. 2

www.GrandCanyonHistory.org

APR/MAY/JUN 2004

In This Issue

PRESIDENT'S
LETTER2

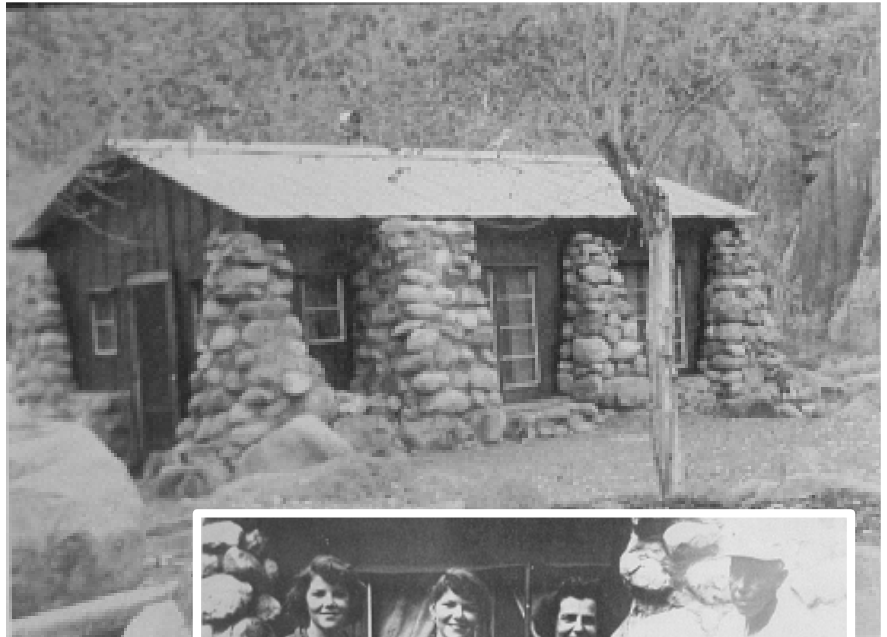
A TIME TO LIVE IN GRAND
CANYON
by Traci Wyrick.....3

THE WESTERING STAR OF
JACK SUMNER
by Don Lago.....6

BACK IN THE EARLY DAYS
by Bill Suran.....10

EXCERPTS FROM "PERSONAL
IMPRESSIONS OF THE GRAND
CANYON"
submitted by Gal Burak11

GRAND CANYON EVENTS12



President's Letter

XXX

Lee Albertson

The Ol' Pioneer

The Quarterly Magazine of the
Grand Canyon Historical Society

VOL. 15 · NO. 2

APR/MAY/JUN 2004

EDITOR: Diane Cassidy

The Historical Society was established in July 1984 as a non-profit corporation to develop and promote appreciation, understanding and education of the earlier history of the inhabitants and important events of the Grand Canyon.

The Ol' Pioneer is published quarterly by the GRAND CANYON HISTORICAL SOCIETY who also publishes THE BULLETIN, a monthly newspaper. Both publications are a benefit of membership. Membership in the Society is open to any person interested in the historical, educational, and charitable purposes of the Society. Membership is on an annual basis using the standard calendar; and dues of \$20 are payable on the 1st of January each year.

The Ol' Pioneer magazine is copyrighted by the Grand Canyon Historical Society, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form without permission of the publisher.

Submit photos, stories, and comments to the editor of *The Ol' Pioneer* at: Articles@GrandCanyonHistory.org or PO Box 10067, Prescott AZ 86304.

GCHS Officers/Board of Directors

Lee Albertson, President;
Keith Green, Vice President and
Outings Coordinator
Linda Anderson, Treasurer
Nancy Green, Secretary and Assistant
Outings Coordinator
Todd Berger, Chairperson of Pioneer
Award
Mike Anderson
Gale Burak
Carolyn Castleman
Mary Hoover
Dr. Tom Myers
Jim Ohlman

Web site:
www.GrandCanyonHistory.org

A Time To Live In Grand Canyon

by Traci Wyrick

In the 1950's, when most American teenagers were fulfilling their school semesters: arising each morning, gathering books and lunches, leaving home, attending classes and returning home again, the 16 year old twin daughters of Dean and Edna Tidball would have endured an arduous and ultimately impossible feat in completing the daily routine, for their home sat at the bottom of Grand Canyon National Park.

Flagstaff High School was approximately 67 miles from Gay and Jo Tidball's home in the Inner Gorge, near the confluence of Bright Angel Creek and the Colorado River. Seven of those miles entailed the steep ascents of the South Kaibab Trail which snaked up to the South Rim. "It would have been impossible to live at home and go to school," says Jo Tidball-Schellbach. "During the two years our parents lived there, we had to board and room with a couple of different families in Flagstaff while we attended high school." Gay Tidball-Cameron says she and her sister returned home during the summers and holidays.

The girls' parents moved into the great chasm in late 1952 when Tidball was hired by the United States Geological Survey to replace hydrographer Charles Cox. The couple was originally from Whitehall, Montana where Tidball owned a creamery business. He worked twenty years of his young life there, while Edna taught at area schools. The couple migrated down to the warmer Arizona climate and worked together at many Indian trading posts, including those at Marble Canyon, Oraibi, Pinon and the famous Hubbell at Ganado. "Daddy en-

joyed the work yet realized there probably wasn't much of a future with the trading posts," says Cameron. "It was while he worked for Ramon Hubbell that he put his application in with the USGS."

The couple moved to Mesa for Tidballs' initial training period. While there, Edna received a teaching position. When the USGS informed Tidball he would be taking over the hydrography assignment on the Colorado River in Grand Canyon, Edna stayed in Mesa to finish out the remaining school year. "Mom immediately put her application in at Grand Canyon Public Schools and was grateful to be hired there the following school year," recalls Schellbach.

"The year Mom was teaching at the rim, we would stay with her on weekends." says Cameron. The twins shared car rides with friends and classmates whose families resided at the South Rim. "Since we weren't old enough to drive yet, friends such as Sam Turner, Betty Bartlett and Don Schellbach would bring us home and then back to school," recalls Cameron.

The Tidball's eldest daughter, Dawn, was a recent graduate of the Montana State College School of Nursing when her Dad received the

hydrographer position. "I fondly remember spending part of the summer following graduation in the canyon and also a few weeks of the following summer," says Dawn Tidball-Myers.

The Tidball canyon home was a metal-roofed, two-room house with outside wooden walls accented in large columns of creekbed stones. The house sat along the Colorado River, west of Bright Angel Creek and the Kaibab Suspension Bridge. One room served as kitchen and living area while the second was a bedroom with an attached bathroom. The family had phone service, a radio and received mail twice a week via mule. Fuel oil brought down from the South Rim ran their lights, oven and heaters. "The house was small, yet we were always comfortable," recalls Schellbach.

Tidball's laboratory building's front porch served as his daughters' bedroom. "The porch was screened in and we all had twin beds," recalls Cameron. "In winter Daddy would cover the screens with a heavy plastic and we kept warm with the heater and lots of blankets on our beds."

Outside the Tidball's house stood a flag pole. The daughters recall how their Dad would faithfully raise the American flag every morning. "Daddy had great pride and appreciation for our country and flew a flag everywhere he lived," says Schellbach. "We proudly helped him with the flag when we were home."

Tidball's work involved the daily traversing in a cable car which hung high above the Colorado River. Gravity would propel him toward the south bank of the river. At fifty feet out, Tidball would lower heavy containers three



*Tidball family in front of canyon home (minus daughter Dawn)
L-R: Jo, Gay, Edna & Dean*

...continued on page 4

A Time To Live...continued from page 3

times, fifteen feet into the river. These containers held water collecting bottles resembling old-time milk bottles. (Tidball liked to tell people how after leaving the creamery business, time had a funny way of bringing milk bottles back into his life.) With water samples collected, Tidball used a hand lever, which worked like an oar, to propel the car back to the north bank.

Back at his lab, he determined the percentage of silt in the water through evaporation of the water and weighing of the remaining residue. The USGS used his data in calculating the number of years it would take for Lake Mead to fill up with sediment. Tidball also collected water samples in the confluence of the creek and river while wading. "I remember Dad also had to routinely hike to Roaring Springs near the north rim to gather comparable data," says Myers. "Our family got to know the Harmon family which lived there."

The USGS required Tidball to submit monthly reports. "Dad was a very conservative man," says Myers, "always electing to hike his reports out rather than mailing them with the mule train. He loved being in nature and didn't mind the isolation of the job." Tidball conducted personal errands such as banking while on the rim. "The year Mom taught, Daddy was always glad to see and spend time with her while he was rimside," says Schellbach.

The Tidball daughters don't remember ever being bored while living in the canyon. "We kept busy with regular chores such as cooking and cleaning and laundry," recalls Schellbach. "We loved to watch and help Daddy with his work. I remember reading the weather station instruments many times for him." "Sometimes we would make our own fun, like making mud pies," laughs Cameron. The sisters played many card games and pitched



*Phantom Ranch pool with one of the twins in the water.
(Don't know the other people.)*

horseshoes with their parents. "I remember working on scrapbooks and embroidering," says Cameron. Myers enjoyed taking photographs, walking and reading. "I remember during a full moon how bright the light shone off the canyon walls," says Myers. "In the reflection one could read a newspaper. I'll also never forget the deer which would gaze in our window while Dad and I ate."

The girls never ventured on long hiking excursions. "I think we enjoyed it so much right where we were, that we never thought of exploring other parts of the canyon," says Schellbach. "In those days we didn't see very many people on the main trails," recalls Myers. "Permits were unheard of and one was "on their own" as far as any rules and dangers."

Cameron remembers how thrilling it was to hear a mule train coming. "It was an exciting break in the day to hear other people coming through," says Cameron. "I enjoyed talking to the guides and occasionally we would visit with trail maintenance workers when they were in the area." Cameron remembers getting many good laughs when the pack mule train entered the tunnel just before the Kaibab Suspension Bridge. "A newer mule would get spooked

upon entering the dark hole," says Cameron. "A big ruckus would ensue, and out would blow this big dust cloud."

The Tidball family especially enjoyed visiting with other canyon residents. Along with the Harmon's of Roaring Springs, a favorite place the family frequented was Phantom Ranch. "Our parents were good friends with Slim and Dottie Patrick who managed the ranch," says Cameron. The couple also shared many cups of coffee and conversation with a ranch working couple who's first names the girls recall were Joe and Bea. Cameron remembers visiting with the Patrick's son Ken,

who worked leading the mule trains.

"We enjoyed helping the Patricks with the ranch, such as making up rooms, cleaning and helping in the kitchen," says Schellbach. "They would often send leftover meals home with us." Cameron says the half mile walk up to the ranch was worth it. "After being so hot and tired, the chilly Phantom Ranch pool was refreshing to swim in," says Cameron. "The pool added so much to the ambience of the area," remembers Myers. "It's hard to imagine Phantom Ranch without it." The daughters recall how nice it was to be at the ranch when the dudes who visited were there. "We often helped serve their meals and just seeing all the new faces was great," smiles Cameron.

The Tidball daughters all rode the mules once, yet hiked the trails on all their other stays. "We didn't mind the trails, and given that my mule ride resulted in my mule deciding to reach far out over the trail edge for a blade of grass, I preferred not to ride again," says Cameron.

The twins share a "never-to-be-forgotten" South Kaibab Trail story. The family rarely had fresh fruits or vegetables while in the

...continued on next page

A Time To Live...continued from previous page

canyon. "We had wonderful meals at the bottom, yet sometimes missed the taste of an apple, etc.," recalls Schellbach. "One summer we decided to carry a watermelon down, along with our two parakeets." The girls pet birds always came home with them each summer. "Here were these two teenage girls clad in tennis shoes, juggling a heavy lopsided watermelon and a bird cage," laughs Cameron. "I'm sure anyone on the trail that day remembers us. We were quite a scene. Jo and I kept trading off the heavy melon for the metal bird cage handle which pierced it's design into our hands." The birds were a blue parakeet named Sky and a yellow-headed green parakeet with a wide vocabulary named Punk. "We had a towel wrapped around their cage," says Cameron. "Every quarter mile we would peek in on them and they looked like gray ghosts! We would wet some kleenex to wipe the trail dust off, but after another quarter mile the birds were covered again." "After that trip we decided having fresh fruit wasn't so important anymore," laughs Schellbach.

Another memorable episode occurred when Punk got loose outside the Tidball home. "We could hear his calls from up in the surrounding trees," says Schellbach.



*The three Tidball daughters today:
L-R: Jo Schellbach, Dawn Myers
and Gay Cameron*



*Inside Phantom Ranch dining hall (or home of one of the couples?).
L-R: Joe, Bea, Dottie Patrick, Edna Tidball, Dean Tidball, Slim Patrick, Gay
Tidball, Jo Tidball and ?*

"We called at him for two days before he finally flew down onto one of our shoulders." Sky lived to be 11 years old and Punk 14. Both sisters laughingly say neither one ever knew he was a bird.

In late 1954, the USGS transferred Tidball to Lee's Ferry.

"Daddy loved the time and work he did in Grand Canyon," says Schellbach. "Though it was such an isolated part of the world, we were all greatly enriched by having lived there."

"The Geological Survey was the perfect job for him," says Myers. "He loved being outdoors and immensely enjoyed the research aspect of his work."

"The Grand Canyon along with Lee's Ferry added another twenty years to his life," says Cameron. "Had he stayed in the cold Montana climate, working in the creamery in the closed-in environment, his spirit and overall health would have suffered. He and Mom both

found their life's passion among the canyon lands of the west." Tidball remained with the USGS up to retirement.

"To everything, turn, turn, turn... there is a season", THE BYRDS' song lyrics resonate... "and a time for every purpose under Heaven." For the Tidball family and a handful of others, there was a time to live in Grand Canyon.

Traci is the proud granddaughter of Dean and Edna Tidball, the admiring niece of Gay Cameron and Dawn Myers and the loving daughter of Jo Schellbach.

Note of interest: Jo married Don Schellbach, the son of Chief Park Naturalist Louis Schellbach III, of which Schellbach Butte, west of the main corridor on the river's north side, is named. Gay married Kenneth Cameron who is a direct ancestor of R.H. Cameron, whom through his witty humor was responsible for the naming of "Pipe Creek" between Bright Angel Trail and Tonto Trail. The town of Cameron, Arizona, is named after R.H.

The Westering Star of Jack Sumner

by Don Lago - Flagstaff AZ

Jack Sumner is one of the most controversial figures in Grand Canyon history. As John Wesley Powell's lead boatman, Sumner deserves much of the credit for the success of the Powell expedition. Yet Sumner's bitter complaints against Powell as a person and as a leader have left Powell historians eager to ignore Sumner, to the point that they've failed to pursue readily available documents that shed valuable light on Sumner's origins, life story, and personality. Only by understanding Sumner's own story can we fairly assess his complaints against Powell.

Jack Sumner was born under a wandering star. A somewhat shady star too: when Jack Sumner's mother was five months pregnant with him, his father was dragged off to jail for some shady real estate dealings. The Sumner family story is a quintessential story of the American frontier, a story of moving on in search of adventure and opportunity (both good and bad), a story of family bonds that repeatedly stretched to keep up with the American Dream. A newly discovered series of documents, including some Sumner family papers, offers us a fuller picture of how Jack Sumner came to be involved with one of the greatest adventures of the American frontier, the Powell expedition.

It seems symbolic of the mobility of Americans on the mid-19th century frontier that even Governors moved onward. Robert Lucas, the grandfather of Jack Sumner, had been governor of Ohio in the early 1830s, and then in 1838 he moved to Iowa and became Iowa's first territorial governor. Another symbolism of the frontier was that in 1832 Lucas had presided over the Democratic National Convention that nominated Andrew Jackson, that embodiment of the frontier, for a second term as President. It was probably to follow Lucas that the Sumner family moved to Iowa a few years after him. With his first wife, Lucas had one daughter, Minerva. After his wife's death, Lucas married a woman named Friendly Sumner. Friendly had a youngest brother named Horatio Nelson Sumner, and Minerva married him. Thus Horatio Sumner was both the brother-in-law and the son-in-law of Governor Lucas. When Horatio and Minerva moved to Iowa, Horatio was following his sister and Minerva was

following her father. They settled in the town of West Liberty, which was only 15 miles from the state Capital of Iowa City, where the Lucas family home, Plum Grove, is preserved today as an Iowa State Historic Site. Horatio Nelson Sumner was presumably named after the British Admiral Horatio Nelson, another fitting symbolism for the father of another famous sailor, Jack Sumner.

There was probably another reason why Horatio and Minerva Sumner moved to Iowa. Horatio had gotten into deep financial and legal trouble back in Indiana. The Sumners had left Ohio for Indiana around 1835, and this too may have been encouraged by some financial misdeeds. Financial misdeeds became a continuing theme of Sumner family history; decades later, Jack Sumner would commit the same misdeed as his father, and thus precipitate a family crisis. So it is worth taking a look at the first evidence of this syndrome, a letter that Minerva wrote to her father on November 6, 1833. Horatio and Minerva were living just south of Columbus, where Lucas was Governor. Horatio seems to have signed a promissory note he was unable to pay off:

*My Dear Father,
I will write you a few lines to inform you of our unexpected trouble. Mr. Knight was hear yesterday demanding his money witch was do in October he says it is impossible for him to wate but a few days and if we cannot make the money he will sell the Note, to a man who will collect it we have nothing to make the money with but our young calves and thay will not sell for half the value of them Horatio has asked me to ask you for money he says you will not lend it to him but I don't think my father*

will see me deprived of the few comforts I now have while his wife and children are enjoying all the comforts they can wish O my Dear father if you will lend Horatio two hundred dollars you will confer an everlasting favour on your unworthy daughter...pleas pray for your affectionate child

Pleas write amediately

Minerva E. B. Sumner

However this turned out, Horatio didn't learn much from it. A series of court documents from Tippecanoe County, Indiana allow us to trace Horatio's further whereabouts and misdeeds. In September of 1936 he was living in Fountain County, Indiana and signed a note worth \$120, due in a year's time. A year and a half later, the holder of the note filed a claim in Tippecanoe County, where Horatio had recently moved. The sheriff took Sumner into custody, and the court fined him the \$120 plus \$50 in damages plus bail. The following year, Horatio signed dozens of notes worth thousands of dollars for several parcels of land totaling 320 acres. It isn't clear whether Horatio was speculating in land, or just being dumb, or committing fraud, but there's no record of him paying anything on these debts. On January 18, 1840, Sumner was taken to jail, and he remained there until the county court reconvened a month later. The court ordered him to pay one plaintiff \$600 and pay the county \$10 for jail expenses. Only weeks later, another plaintiff caught up with Horatio and forced him to agree to sign over his land, but unknown to the court or the plaintiff's attorney, the plaintiff had died shortly before the court agreed to this settlement, and thus the whole matter was thrown into a

...continued on next page

The Westering Star

...continued from previous page

legal limbo that would take years to settle. It became an annual event for the Tippecanoe County court to issue a summons for Horatio Sumner to appear, but he was long gone, and only in 1847 did the court declare Sumner's land forfeit.

Into this turmoil Jack Sumner was born on May 16, 1840. In his Civil War enlistment form, Sumner would list his birthplace as Tippecanoe County. Powell historians have listed his birthplace as Newton, Indiana, based on Sumner family sources, but the puzzle here is that there has never been any Newton in Tippecanoe County. Lucas family researchers have given us a hand here and found that Jack Sumner was actually born in Newtown, Indiana, which was in Fountain County, just over the Tippecanoe County line. Jack Sumner's reliability has long been debated among Powell historians, given Sumner's controversial complaints against Powell, so it is worth noting that Sumner didn't even know what county he was born in. Had Minerva taken refuge with friends or relatives in Newtown when Horatio was hauled to jail? It's interesting to note that Minerva's future son-in-law, William Byers, had an uncle near Newtown. Byers' diary for 1850 mentions his visit to this uncle.

Yet one Sumner family source says that the Sumner family didn't meet the Byers family until they were in Iowa. Chauncey Thomas, who would marry Jack Sumner's youngest sister Flora and whose father worked with William Byers at his Denver newspaper, said that shortly after Horatio Sumner settled in West Liberty in 1841, a covered wagon pulled up at his gate. The occupant asked about the roads ahead and about land to settle, and Horatio told him there were no good roads ahead and no bridges and he might as well settle on the good land right next door to Horatio. And he did. One has to wonder if Horatio happened to have signed some promissory notes on this land. The newcomer,

Mr. Byers, had a ten year old son named William, and Horatio had a seven year old daughter named Elizabeth, and thirteen years later they got married. Thus Jack Sumner grew up next door to William Byers, and it was Byers who would now pull the Sumner family further west.

Byers became a surveyor and worked his way to Oregon and California. After his marriage he settled in Omaha and became a leading citizen there, serving in the first Nebraska state legislature. One day a drunken brawl broke out in the street outside his surveying office, and Byers went out to stop it, only to get receive a shotgun blast in the shoulder. Since surveyors had to haul heavy equipment on their shoulders, Byers' career was ruined. But fate soon intervened in the form of a man who owed Byers several hundred dollars but was going broke trying to run a nearby town newspaper; this man was quitting and joining the Colorado gold rush and giving Byers his printing press as payment for his debt. Byers was now a newspaperman.

Byers too was hearing the call of Colorado, so he decided to become a Colorado newspaperman. He bought some wagons and horses, one of which was named Jack in honor of Jack Sumner. Jack Sumner's brothers Ed and Robert would drive the teams to Colorado. On February 27, 1859, Robert wrote a long letter to Jack, who was back with his parents on the farm. Robert reported: "We have got nearly all fixed ready for the trip, will probably start next week." [The following Sumner family letters are published with permission of Western History Collection, Denver Public Library]. But Robert expressed doubt that Byers could succeed with the paper: "He will wish he had of had nothing to do with it. My opinion is it will not pay, it will be a fizzle because half of the best papers in the states have failed with four times as many subscribers as he will be able to

raise in the mining region." But Robert was more optimistic about the prospects of those selling supplies to the prospectors: "John tell Dad now is the time to lay the foundation for a nice little fortune. He can do it by buying a lot of young cattle. The thing is working precisely as it did in 1849 when the California gold fever broke out. It is the case here when a man comes in, wants to buy an ox team, he will give most any price. They don't stand on trifles. You farmers had better stay at home and raise a good crop, all probability is that you will find some gold in Iowa." This and later comments suggest that Jack Sumner was feeling left out of a great adventure; even his younger brother Charlie had gone with Ed and Robert to Omaha, although Charlie would stay there for school. Two weeks earlier, Charlie had written home about their arrival in Omaha, how the view from the Missouri River bluff was "the finest view that we ever saw before in our lives." It seems that Jack was writing to Charlie, for on Feb. 21 Charlie assured him: "John you are mistaken about me going with the boys out to the mines."

On March 8, Charlie wrote home: "The boys have just started for the mines. This is an eventful day. This Tuesday the 8th of March has separated us all from each other, perhaps forever." He went on ruminating on the possibility that the family would never be together again. A week later he wrote: "After supper I will write to the brats, John included. I am not a brat anymore, I am a student. All I want of you John is simply this: Write to me often, yes often." A week later he reported that he has heard from the boys and berated Jack for not writing him more often. On April 26 Charlie answered about some sort of trouble with the neighbors, and about Jack's wanderlust: "Well John don't get too mad at those nasty sloughites. I would give about a baker's dozen of them a good mauling and let the

...continued on page 8

others go on in their sins. I would not give an inch for any of them. Just let them go to China, and you stay where you are. I would not go on the boat this summer. John wait until we all come home and then if you must go, then you can be spared a little better. It would leave the old folks in a bad situation. No don't go." It's not clear what boat Jack was yearning for, but it is worth noting that the Sumner farm was only twenty miles from the Mississippi River, and this was the heyday of the steamboat. On May 8 Charlie expressed his homesickness: "Golly sometimes I can see John and Will up in the woods by the little prairie or Cedarville Crossing, Will with a squirrel on his back trudging along behind John."

Early in 1861, William Byers wrote an enthusiastic letter to Charlie urging him to come to Denver, promising him a job: "can give you a good one, in the office, on a farm, or in the mines." Charlie went home to visit his parents and siblings, and then headed for Colorado. Upon arriving in Denver, Charlie wrote back glowing accounts of the beauty of the Rockies, the progress of the city, the booming mines, and the success of the Byers newspaper. Charlie went to work for Byers, riding newspapers to the mountain towns for \$30 a week. This must have finally proven too much for Jack Sumner, for now he too headed west. He arranged to meet up with his brother Ed, who was working as a clerk for Byers, for a trapping expedition. On June 9, Minerva used the backside of a recent letter from Charlie to write to Ed and Jack, a letter full of motherly concern for a son who was now facing the wilderness. After much religious sentiment and moral instruction, she advised, referring to the outbreak of the Civil War: "Don't go among the Indians, they won't suffer you to trap on their land. They are all anxious to join the fight and divide the United States with the whites... Be careful. A wrong step is fatal. God bless

you and keep you." Jack had written her on April 28, and the letter, which does not survive, took over a month to reach Iowa, and Minerva complained about the slowness of the mail and expressed anxiety to hear from Jack and Ed. Minerva soon received a letter from Charlie, and he too was anxious about them: "Where is John and why don't he and Ed write?"

We never do learn exactly where Jack was on his first western adventure. The next time we can place him is from his Union army enlistment form, signed in Iowa over a year later. But this mere glimpse of Jack Sumner in the west makes an important correction to an unfortunate habit of Powell biographers. Under the impression that Sumner didn't go west until 1866, they have ridiculed Sumner for putting on the airs of a veteran mountain man to Powell a year later. Yet back in 1861, at the age of 21, Jack Sumner was already living a mountain man's life, dealing with trapping and Indians. We can guess that Jack Sumner soon found his way to Denver in the wake of a family tragedy. After only a month of hauling newspapers into the mountains, Charlie was stricken with Mountain Fever. A doctor gave him a prescription for quinine, but by mistake he got a bottle of morphine, and Charlie, with his great affection towards Jack, became violently sick and died.

The Civil War was hard on Jack Sumner. In the battle of Pleasant Hill, Louisiana in April of 1864, a shell exploded nearby and broke both his legs and dislocated both hips, a shell fragment striking him in the head. Two decades later Sumner implied that this head wound still caused him severe headaches. Reading Civil War pension records often seems like watching a game of cat and mouse, with the veteran making excessive claims and the officials doubting them, but there's no doubt that Sumner was badly off at the end of the war, judging from a December

1865 letter Ed Sumner wrote to his sister Lib back in Iowa: "You tell me that Jack is getting better--am glad to hear of that--I feared he would never get well again."

William and Elizabeth Byers went back to Iowa at the end of 1865, and Elizabeth and her children stayed until spring. Then she took charge of getting Jack out to Colorado. It is a likely sign of Jack's continuing precarious health that Elizabeth purchased an ambulance and team of horses to carry him across Iowa to Omaha. Elizabeth drew upon Byers' old connections with the Union Pacific Railroad, which was based in Omaha, and arranged for a special train to carry just their family out to Fort Kearney, the end of the line at that moment. At Fort Kearney, they joined a wagon train heavy with supplies bound for Montana, and after a hundred miles they broke off and headed for Denver on their own. There were plenty of Indian troubles on the plains that spring, so Elizabeth was quite aware of the risk they were taking, but this was her seventh trek across the plains, so she also had the confidence of a tough pioneer woman. Years later she recalled her trek west with Jack:

My horses were high spirited and rebelled at being kept back by this freight train, so my brother would find out where we were expected to camp in the evening, then we would go ahead and stop at the camping place and have a restful time before the train came. I have so often thought since what a daring thing we did...I have no doubt but what our little party would have been watched many times by roving bands of Indians. We left the wagon train at North Platte coming from there all alone, camping one night near a station with our horses tethered not far from the tent, and a tremendous thunder storm came up, with the most vivid lightning I ever saw. In the midst of the storm I heard an unusual noise. It seemed to me like a snort from one of the horses. I reached

...continued on next page

The Westering Star...continued from previous page

over and touched my brother who sprang awake in an instant. We sat up watching and just then there was a most terrific flash of lightning that enabled us to see two men creeping on their hands and knees towards our horses. My heart stood still, for I realized in an instant what our plight would have been had we been left there without our team. A few shots from John's revolver sent them flying. We tied the horses close to the tent and tried to get a little sleep. [Excerpted from a talk given to an unidentified Denver audience; published with permission of Western History Collection, Denver Public Library].

When John Wesley Powell met Jack Sumner a year later, he was meeting a man who embodied the toughness and experience of an entire family of important Colorado pioneers.

Yet embodying a family can bring trouble too. In a Greek tragedy, a character flaw combined with the wrong circumstances will lead inevitably towards an appropriate disaster. Sometime shortly before 1880, Jack Sumner signed a note worth a considerable amount of money. Later Jack would claim that an old trapper friend of his had forged his name to this note, but the court issued its judgment against Sumner. The holder of the note, a man named Martin, came to William Byers and demanded to know Sumner's whereabouts, but it seems that Byers didn't tell him. Years later, in 1886, Minerva Sumner died in Denver, to which she had followed her children, and since her children had invested for her in the booming Denver real estate market, the woman who had once been disgraced by real estate debt ended

up leaving \$26,000 in real estate to her children. Byers became executor of the estate, and he wrote to Jack Sumner in Grand Junction saying that he needed Jack's signature on the estate, as his siblings were quite eager to sell their lots into a peaking real estate market. Jack wrote back and asked if the Martin note business might mean that Martin could lay claim to the estate, and Byers answered that while he would not voluntarily tell Martin anything or give him any money, Martin could probably get a court order and force the issue, and he told Jack to get an attorney and to sign his share of the estate over to his wife. Jack's wife then signed her share over to their children, who were minors, and since minors could not legally own real estate, the whole estate was frozen in legal limbo, legally required to wait a whole decade before Jack's children came of legal age. Jack's siblings were not amused. Byers fired off a series of angry letters to Jack's attorney: "You have got this matter into a fine muddle by your blundering. I cannot undertake to untangle your work", and to Jack: "He has gotten you into a nice scrape and now appears to be a way beyond his depth and can't swim." In the midst of this, Jack Sumner disappeared for two months, perhaps on another of his prospecting trips. When Jack reappeared, Byers wrote to him furiously: "Please do not leave home again until you have fixed that trust deed matter. I cannot do a thing until that is adjusted. Have applications for lots almost every day but cannot make deeds until you fix that up." Byers tried to maneuver to sell some land, but now Jack's attorney

threatened to sue Byers to stop him. A full year passed since Minerva's death, the Denver real estate market was in "harvest time", and now everyone in the family was exasperated with Jack, the baby who had been born under a shady real estate star. Finally Byers threatened to sue Jack Sumner to force the court to annul the Catch-22 "on grounds of error or misinterest." It is here that Byers' letter ledger book ends, and there's no further ledger book, so we don't know how this saga turned out. But it must have left some bad feelings, for Jack Sumner would not return to Denver and visit his siblings for another 15 years.

The Sumners recognized that they were somehow doomed to follow a shady star. Decades later, in 1931, nearly a full century after Minerva wrote to Governor Lucas pleading for money, a son of Jack Sumner, Ed, wrote to a son of William Byers, Frank, to plead for money. Ed Sumner was deeply in debt and about to lose his home, which was the only thing he could leave to his children. In the middle of detailing his failed mining and other ventures and his debts and his desire to get a little money together to get into the chicken business, Ed paused and reflected on Sumner destiny: "But it seems strange that the Sumner blood in you must have let loose in some other way than it has with the rest of us. Father was not contented: for just what reason I do not know. Only he wanted a plenty of this worlds good, but would not stop long enough for it to catch up with him, therefore was always on the go."

"Did I ever tell you about the time the King of Belgium gave me a medal?"
As reminded by Earle Spamer

In 1919, King Albert and Queen Elizabeth of Belgium toured America. Their train stopped at Grand Canyon, where they paid an unlikely royal visit. In an update of their travels printed in the *New York Times* for October 20, 1919, is this passing note: "At the Grand Canyon, L. H. Cockrum, a brakeman, suffered severe injuries to one leg, while coupling cars.

He was visited by the King and Queen in the baggage car, and, the King decorated him with the Order of Leopold II." What is especially a head-scratcher is, why indeed would the King of Belgium be traveling about America with a bag of medals, much less to pin one to a railroad brakeman? Actually, the Order of Leopold II was handed out by

the bushy by Belgian monarchs, a royal tip-of-the-crown, so to speak, to acknowledge valorous conduct in the service of Belgium. Since "Albert, King of the Belgians" was Belgium, out came the medal for poor Mr. Cockrum. And surely, out came the medal for years afterward, if for no more common an audience than wide-eyed grandkids.



Back in the Early Days

by Bill Suran – Flagstaff AZ

Visitors who came to the Grand Canyon back in the early days were more fortunate when it came to getting a park ranger to take them around and displaying all the sites than it is today. Back at that time your guide would take you on horse-back along the rim or if you wished, would include trips down trails into the Canyon. Not only that, he could give you a place to spend the night and some darn good meals during your stay.

At that time the way to get to the Canyon was not as comfortable as it is today and the trip took more than a couple of hours to get there. You would start bright and early from Flagstaff in front of the Bank Hotel located on the corner of Gold Street and Railroad and head north toward the mountain peak on a long, hard all day trip.

At first the trip was nice. It traveled through the pine forests that covered the lower part of the peaks. The trail was shady and in pretty good shape, but soon dropped to the flat prairie section where trees were something nature had never heard of and during the summer was hot and dusty. The team of horses kicked up a cloud of blinding dust that after a few miles you began to wonder if going to the canyon would be worth the trip.

After what seemed like forever your driver stopped at what was called The Cedars to change the team and give you a chance to get a bite to eat before you headed out along the dusty trail again. It was late afternoon before you once again entered pine trees and circled up to what looked like a cabin surrounded by white canvas tents. The driver announced, "You are now at the Grand Canyon." You jumped out of the dusty wagon and began to look around. Where was the canyon that you came all this way to see?



On the way

To your surprise a tall *slender man with a mustache would come out on the porch waving his hand welcoming you to the Grand Canyon. He would then introduce himself as Captain John Hance, the keeper of the establishment where you would spend your time at the big ditch.

The ladies were at once taken to a series of single tents that were furnished as though they were first class hotel rooms where they could wash up and change clothes if they wished. The men had one circus-like tent just to the back of the log cabin where nice comfortable beds were made up for them.

Of course the thing of most interest to all of the visitors was the Canyon and the new host pointed toward the low ridge about a hundred feet away from where the crowd stood.

The sun was just beginning to set behind the peak to the west of the Canyon, painting the sky in shades of red and pink with some purples and blue mixed in. The new visitors stood on the rock ledge in awe. It was worth the ride through the

dust to be there.

As they continued to look they could see the sun sink farther below the peaks that poked their heads above the depths of the canyon until darkness began to hide them, forcing the guests all to turn back to the tents and the log building where billows of smoke rose from the chimney where Mr. Hance had supper cooking at the big stone fireplace inside.

Hance was a good cook too. Most of his meals were wild life that he had hunted in the forest or fish he had caught out of the river. He also managed to have a little garden close by the house where in the spring he got a lot of green vegetables. All his guests looked forward to the meals while they stayed at the Canyon.

Another thing they looked forward to when around Hance were some of his wild tales. They might come up most any place where some one might ask a question or whenever Hance had an idea for one. A good number of these came in his mind while the guests sat on the porch after supper.

...continued on next page



John Hance ready to go

Back in the Early Days...continued from previous page

One evening he popped out with "I remember a time not so long ago when I was ridin' along the canyon not payin' much mind to what I was doin', when I wakes up to the fact my old hoss has plumb walked offa the rim an' is a mile out from it. The fog was shore thick that day."

When a credulous visitor asked "What did you do, Mr. Hance?" He answered, "What did I do? Why I turned around and come back, that's what I did. Maybe I'd of hit a hole in that fog if I'd a rode on towards the other side!"

Other than the river trips about the only thin the Canyon had to offer were horseback rides through the forest along the rim where the tourists saw deer dashing through the trees or noticed the squirrels barking at them from a tree branch.

In the early spring or fall when the evenings were a little too cool to sit on the porch and talk, the fireplace was a good place to gather and listen to the wild tales that



The halfway stop

Hance had to tell. By the last of October it was getting too cool to sit outside and that is when the fireplace felt good. It was also a time when the number of people thinned out and Hance began to get things put away for the snows of winter.

With the threat of winter, Hance moved down the trails to the river where he had built himself a stone cabin and fished. Occasionally he made his way to the Canyon rim and hunted a deer or if the weather was not too bad he saddled up his horse and made a trip to Flagstaff to get what he needed.

As time passed more hotels moved into the area along the rim.

There was Berry's Grand View Hotel just a short distance west of Hance's place, Cameron's Hotel and Buggeln's place on the rim at Bright Angel, and last but not least the big El Tovar Hotel that Fred Harvey built. Now all of these are gone except the El Tovar.

There was the arrival of the Santa Fe trains bringing crowds of people up from the main line in Williams. Now even that exists only as a tourist attraction.

Then came the highways we have today with a constant flow of cars and buses loaded down with visitors for a quick hour or so visit.

With all of this Hance's days soon passed into oblivion and today the only part of his cabin that exists is the rock foundation and a few scraps of shingles from the roof. Berry's Grand View vanished, leaving no sign of its location. All of this is unknown to today's tourist.

Excerpts from "Personal Impressions of the Grand Canyon" (by G. K. Woods) as taken from John Hance's Guestbook from 1891-1898

submitted by Gale Burak - North Woodstock NH

G. K. Woods was the "gentle-
manly Manager of the Grand
Canyon Stage line, to whom all
letters for information on the Grand
Canyon - stage and hotel rates,
etc. - are respectfully referred."
Concord Stagecoaches were used in
the run from Flagstaff to Grand
Canyon: The trip can be made by
the latest mode of transportation
(1899), -- "The Auto-Mobile
Carriage," -- or by the well-
tried and thoroughly reliable
Concord Coach, which is the chief
equipment of J. Wilbur Thurbur's
Grand Canyon Stage Line. (page 19)

Tourists traveled by "stage and
six", changing to a new relay of
horses at Little Springs Station and
partaking of luncheon at the half-
way point of Cedar Station. With a
new relay of horses they hastened

over "the desert portion of our ride
to Moqui Station, where another
relay takes us to the Canon Hotel
(John Hance's)", after a twelve hour
trip.

A cook at the mining camp of
Messrs. Cameron and Berry,
Joseph Gildner, discovered the
caves on Horseshoe Mesa (lately?)
which by 1899 "formed one of the
principal of the many attractions of
the Grand Canon, and can only be
reached by the Cameron or Grand
View Hotel."

*April 16-20, 1891: Gifford
Pinchot, New York: Went to the
river (on Old Hance Trail). Time
head of trail to river and back, 9
hours and 55 minutes.*

*June 18, 1891: Niles J.
Cameron, Flagstaff, Az.*

*July 18, 1891: Lewis D.
Boucher, Sherbrooke, P. Q.,
Canada*

*August 16, 1891: W. J. Hull
"First entered the canon June 22,
1884; June 26, 1884 commenced
surveying road from canon to
Cedar Ranch, in company with
Silas Ruggles and John Hance.
First visit to canon in February,
1880 I.O.O.F., K. of P., 9 AM.*

*January 25, 1893: Wm. O.
O'Neill (First of season) "God
made the canon, John Hance the
trails. Without the other, neither
would be complete." (This was
"Buckey", who was killed on July 1,
1898 while making ready for the
charge up San Juan Hill with the
Rough Riders.)*

Grand Canyon Events

In cooperation with the Grand Canyon Association, we will publish in *The Ol'Pioneer* a list of events and activities at the Grand Canyon to keep all of you abreast of what's happening, especially because of several anniversaries that will be celebrated over the next year or two (Kolb Studio is 100 years old in 2004, the El Tovar and Hopi House also will be 100 in early 2005.) If you have any questions about the events listed on this page, please write Grand Canyon Association at PO Box 399, Grand Canyon AZ 86023 or GCAssociation@GrandCanyon.org or call 928-638-2481.

April 8:

Grand Canyon Association's lecture series in Flagstaff: ***Bully! For Public Lands*** presented by Teddy Roosevelt. In the persona of good old T.R., champion of conservation, Keith McGough faithfully invokes President Roosevelt's turn-of-the-century values and a sense of adventure as bridges to today's challenges in caring for public lands. The lecture begins at 6:30 PM at the Cline Library in Flagstaff.

May 16:

Grand Canyon Association's lecture series in Prescott: ***Mishaps and Tragedies at Grand Canyon*** presented by Tom Myers, M.D., physician at the Grand Canyon National Park clinic for nine years and author of "Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon." The lecture begins at 1:00 PM in the Exhibit Hall at the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott.

April 13 through June 6:

Exhibit at Kolb Studio: *Arts for the Parks: Top 100 Tour*. Each year a national competition is conducted by the National Park Academy of the Arts in cooperation with the National Park Foundation. Paintings depict national park or monument subjects. This exhibit features the top 100 paintings selected from thousands entered in the 2003 competition. Join the Grand Canyon Association for an opening reception on Monday, April 12, 7:00-9:00 PM. Desserts catered by El Tovar.

April 18:

Grand Canyon Association's lecture series in Prescott: ***Grand Canyon Prehistory, an Archaeological Overview*** presented by the Grand Canyon National Park Science Center. The rich human history of Grand Canyon National Park comes alive with a presentation by the Park's resource managers. The lecture begins at 1:00 PM in the Exhibit Hall at the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott.

May 20:

Grand Canyon Association's lecture series in Flagstaff: ***Writing Down the River*** presented by Kathleen Jo Ryan. Over the course of one summer, 15 of today's best women writers descended into the heart of the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River. Photographer/Producer Kathleen Jo Ryan put the experience together, photographed it, and later produced a beautiful book *Writing Down the River*.

Grand Canyon Historical Society

P.O. Box 10067

Prescott, Arizona 86304-0067

02-04

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD U.S. POSTAGE PAID PRESCOTT, AZ PERMIT #43
--