

The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

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Winter 2014



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President's Letter

To all members of the Grand Canyon Historical Society, we wish you a very Happy New Year! May 2014 bring everyone success, happiness, and many visits to the Grand Canyon! Since the last edition of *The Ol' Pioneer*, the Society has been busy on many fronts. As always, we work to ensure that Grand Canyon's history is preserved and enjoyed by many. To that end, here are some of the initiatives we have been working on.

One of the biggest news items is that we accepted delivery of the latest symposium volume entitled: *A Rendezvous of Grand Canyon Historians: Ideas, Arguments, and First Person Accounts*. At 303 pages and containing 42 chapters, it provides the content for all but one of the talks given at the 2012 Symposium. It is the largest of the three volumes that have now been published. All members owe a huge debt of gratitude to Richard Quartaroli who edited the volume and to Hazel Clark who did a bang-up job designing this attractive volume. The Society would also like to acknowledge the Grand Canyon Association who published the volume and will sell it in the park's bookstores and on their web site. If you would like to order your copy (a steal at \$19.95), just visit the GCA's web site at: www.grandcanyon.org/shop/online-store/new.

The Board held their (now) semi-annual meeting in Flagstaff at the home of Murphy Johnson. We moved forward on our Strategic Plan, with a number of critical items receiving attention. Perhaps the most exciting development is the start of the GCHS Oral History Project (OHP). The Board approved using some of our long-held funds to begin an interview process of those persons who have lived and/or worked in the Grand Canyon region. A training session with members of the park's Museum Collections and NAU's Cline Library Special Collections will be held in February or March. If you would like to be part of this program, either as an interviewer or interviewee, please contact Tom Martin at your earliest convenience: secretary@grandcanyonhistory.org. This is sure to be another lasting legacy of our Society.

We also decided to expand our Scholarship program to include funding for research related to Grand Canyon's history. This grant money will be open to anyone researching Grand Canyon history, and not just those who are students at a university. It will be designed to support small projects (under \$1,000) such as digitizing a historic photo collection, a scholar's travel to access a collection, or similar research expenses. We will announce specific limits, research parameters, reporting requirements, and application deadlines later this year. Please consider contributing to our new and expanded Scholarship & Research Fund when you renew your membership!

The Board also approved additional funding to enlarge and expand the page count and content on our Web site. If you have not visited the web site recently, please be sure to see what our Web Master, Diane Cassidy, has been up to at: www.grandcanyonhistory.org. There you will find an expanded tool bar that describes the new Research grants and the new Oral History Project.

This is the time of year to renew your membership in the GCHS. As you can see, there are many exciting initiatives in the works and we need your support more than ever. Here's to a rousing, successful 2014 for everything Grand Canyon!

Wayne Ranney
GCHS President

Cover: Looking into Canyon from Havasupai Point. Photographer R.S. Leding. Circa 1952. NPS photo. Ruby Canyon is located at the bottom center, Le Conte Plateau to its right.

2 : Grand Canyon Historical Society

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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.

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Submissions to *The Bulletin* should be sent to Karen Greig, kgreig@yahoo.com

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Louis Schellbach's Log Books: Part VIII

by Traci Wyrick

(SEPT – EARLY NOVEMBER 1945)

Saturday Sept. 1, 1945

A.M. Shop duty. P.M. off. Out to West Rim to try new color film. Completed roll of Kodachrome. To movie in evening. Japan has formally signed the unconditional surrender terms this evening. Tomorrow V-J day. Large crowds pouring into the park for holiday.

Tuesday Sept. 4, 1945

On corresp. Received three volumes of early annual reports of the Bureau of Amer. Ethnology from Mr. Edgar M. Craven, Mt. Lakes, New Jersey. Also a clock to replace the one in the Rain gage by the Weather Bureau. Worked until 12:20 a.m. at Shop with Les Arnberger on making study skin of squirrel and on pottery restoring.

Thursday Sept. 6, 1945

Yavapai duty for day. Les. A.'s day off. He leaves Saturday. Received the shipping box for fish from U.S. Nat'l Museum, from Warehouse in a.m. Miss Eppler, former stenographer, is visiting at G.C. To the house in evening.

Friday Sept. 7, 1945

A.M. shop duty on monthly report, and correspondence. Evening Les Arnberger's folks over to the Workshop and house to see Kodachrome exhibit. He leaves tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. for Tucson. This leaves me alone again to carry on.

Sunday Sept. 9, 1945

On duty at Yavapai for day. Although the law calls for working only 40 hours a week and beyond that overtime pay—I still have to work more and no overtime. To avoid paying such the Supt. has asked that I take compensatory time next week.

I do not want compensatory time off—much prefer receiving overtime pay. However for him to pay that it must be an emergency and he cannot justify keeping Yavapai open as an emergency—so I am the goat again. Will have to work at Yavapai again tomorrow, making practically eight days in a row. Battery in Gov't car dead.

Wednesday Sept. 12, 1945

Morning off. P.M. Shop. The 10:30 a.m. lecture discontinued for season. Kenneth Lundie to be made temporary ranger and assigned to Naturalist work and Yavapai duty tomorrow. M.N.A. returned Hermit litho spec. by express.

Tuesday Sept. 18, 1945

At shop on archaeological specimen restoration. The Harvey Bus, afternoon trip to Desert View inaugurated (1:30 p.m.) At Yavapai in p.m. breaking in Ken Lundie. At shop in evening on mending pottery. Ken also there studying and preparing himself for delivering the Yavapai Talk.

Friday Sept. 21, 1945

Shop duty. Ken at Yavapai. Worked on restoring pottery of site 480. On duty in p.m. at Yavapai with Ken. He to give his first lecture there. Did fairly well.

Sunday Sept. 23, 1945

At work in Shop on pottery restoring and around noon out to Victory Garden to harvest potatoes and onions. To dinner at El Tovar with family and Mrs. Collom. Shop in evening.

Monday Sept. 24, 1945

Attended rain gage. In shop. Ken at Yavapai. Gave the 3:30 p.m. lecture so that he could get a better idea of presenting the story. To shop in evening until 10:45 p.m. with Mrs.

Collom and Kenneth. She at work on mounting botanical specimens. Ken and I on pottery restoration. A new species of Carex grass added to collection. The first record for the State and the Park. Ken and Mrs. C. to go to the North Rim for Wednesday and Thursday. Packed fish for sending to U.S. National Museum for study and determination. Attended reading of draft on the Naturalist and Interpretive Departments sent by C.P. Russell, Chief Naturalist for suggestions. Answered same.

Thursday Sept. 27, 1945

Yavapai duty. Bound Kodachrome slides some 80 odd. Windy and chilly on parapet so held lecture indoors. Kenneth and Mrs. R. Collom returned this evening with a goodly collection of plant specimens. Shop in evening.

Saturday Sept. 29, 1945

Day Off. Worked at Shop on restoring pottery. In p.m. out to Yavapai to take a series of photos showing visitors using the interpretive mechanisms. To movie in evening with family and Mrs. C. Daylight saving time abolished at 2 a.m. tomorrow. We go back to standard time.

Tuesday Oct. 2nd 1945

Delivered 200 copies of "Ancient Landscapes" to Emery Kolb per McKee's letter 9/20-'45. Received from Josef Muench, Pictorial photographer, a salon print of Grand Canyon titled "The Spirit of Grand Canyon," for the Grand Canyon collections. Accessioned books received on the 1st and made Library of Congress cat card notices. Bryant says he cannot have the herbarium labels typed by the steno. She is too busy around the 1st of month. So I did them myself as Mrs. Collom leaves the end of the week and the sheets should be finished and placed in herbarium. Completed pricing the large vela from Site 480 this afternoon.

Wednesday Oct. 3, 1945

Yavapai duty. Ken's day off. Not notified that there will be a staff meeting.

Monday Oct. 8th, 1945

A.M. duty at Workshop. Made up book sales a/c for September and the bank deposit for G.C. Natural History Assn. Prepared two letters for H.C.B. to sign. Prepared a specimen of the Halapai tiger, collected at Kolb Studio yesterday. The first specimen from the rim. On duty at Yavapai in p.m. Kenneth at work on observation records. Saw doctor this a.m. (10:30) he checked my blood pressure, temperature, heart, lungs, nostrils, ears, eyes, and what not, but could find nothing wrong with me. Gave me some nose drops and pills and asked that I call and see him again day after tomorrow.

Wednesday Oct. 10, 1945

Lundie's day off. Schellbach Yavapai duty. General clean up of Station and grounds. 1 p.m. at workshop giving special lecture on conservation and park naturalist duties, responsibilities and qualifications to the Conservation Class of Dr. Allen of the Flagstaff State College. Then gave them a talk on museum and collection techniques and showed them the study collections. Asst. Supt. Davis relieved at Yavapai during the interim. Back to Yavapai at 2:30 p.m. and again had the class attending the regular 3:30 p.m. lecture. What with the visiting public attending had an overcrowded house, but everything went well. My head cold bothered me greatly and I had a splitting headache all day.

Thursday Oct. 11, 1945

Lundie's day off. Schellbach, Yavapai duty. Turned over book sales account and bank deposit slip to G.C. Natural History Assn. treasurer, Miss Verkamp. Received prints from Northrop of the exposures made at Yavapai a week ago. They were not so good. Held the 3:30 p.m. lecture indoors and thankful I did for during the talk a heavy thunder shower

materialized and made the porch unusable. Received slide cover glass.

Tuesday Oct. 16, 1945

Lundie at Yavapai. Schellbach at Workshop. Received rain gage clock and replaced same. Mailed back old one to U.S. Weather Bureau. Packed and expressed herbarium specimens of "Ranunculus" to Dr. Benson at Pomona. In a.m. gave the orientation talk to members of the Armed Forces at the Rest Camp. In p.m. packed and mailed plant specimens collected by Mrs. Collom to Dr. Kearney at San Francisco. At work packing moss specimens to be sent to Mrs. Haring.

Wednesday Oct. 17, 1945

Full day duty at Yavapai. Lundie's day off. Heavy attendance all day. Ordered 20 year index of Journal of Mammology, cloth-bound at \$3.50 for the Reference Library. Took several bills to the Treasurer, Miss Verkamp for her attention. In evening, dinner guests of Davy Jones at the Army Rest Camp, and remained for the U.S.O. movie.

Friday Oct. 19, 1945

Shop duty. Attended preparing several entomological specimens and corresp. Filed Kodachrome slides. Worked on restoring pottery from site, G.C. 480. 56 visitors at Workshop during day.

Saturday Oct. 20, 1945

Day Off. Birthday for me this day. Geo. O. Bonawit as weekend guest. Came up from Parker Dam. Went out to Grand View late in afternoon for photographing.

Sunday Oct. 21, 1945

In a.m. down the Kaibab Trail a way for scenic photographic shots. Geo. Left at 2:20 p.m. for Parker Dam.

Monday Oct. 22, 1945

Shop in a.m. Lundie at Yavapai. Attended correspondence. Afternoon duty at Yavapai. Lundie at Shop on bringing Wildlife observations to data. Evening at Shop on pottery restoration until 10:30 p.m.

Friday Oct. 26, 1945

At Workshop. Lundie at Yavapai. Continued with pottery restoration and correspondence. The Levitts visited the shop in a.m. Mr. Wolf also visited at Shop and the botany professor from U. of C. Evening, 8:00 p.m. had the Levitts and the Wolf's together with several others at Shop to a Kodachrome exhibit of Grand Canyon subjects.

Saturday Oct. 27, 1945

Day Off. Lundie to leave me for the North Rim for the winter on Wednesday. Evening to show with Donny Lou.

Tuesday Oct. 30, 1945

Completed pottery restoration and painting. Started accessioning and cataloging material. Lundie, Yavapai Station. Lundie leaves for North Rim caretakers job for the winter.

Thursday Nov. 1, 1945

Yavapai duty. Relieved in p.m. by H.C. Bryant. Had to take photographs of structures, roads, walls, paths, fireplaces, etc. to show their disrepair since the War, because of lack of funds and help. Evening held Boy Scouts Committee Meeting, to examine boys for 2nd Class Scouts. Changed filters in camera.

Monday Nov. 5, 1945

Day off. Went to shop and changed graph sheet on rain gage. Made up October publication sales account and bank deposit for Grand Canyon Natural History Ass'n. Ordered 200 copies of G.C. Country and wrote Griffith Observatory. Handed H.C.B. the film exposures of subjects needing attention at G.C.N.P. He took over Yavapai today. Tomorrow got to Flagstaff with family to attend to purchases and car, also to Williams to make bank deposit in person for G.C.N.H. Assn thus saving money order fees. H.C.B. going to attend Rotary luncheon and asked me as guest should I be able to get to Flag by 12 noon. (Loaned Kenneth Lundie three personal books for use on North Rim this winter.; "History of Philosophy"

"Guide of the Arctures by Beeker"
"Camp Cooking" by Kephart.)

NEW NAMES NOT PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED: (I excluded any names Schellbach already identifies in the above entries). If readers know information on any names with a "?", please send it to myself or the editor. Josef Muench — (1904-1998) his name became synonymous with AZ Highways magazine after his captivating photography of Rainbow Bridge . He first arrived in Arizona in 1936, and made 200 trips to Grand Canyon. He is considered the ultimate environmentalist through his wide range of photography of Earth's natural treasures.

George Bonawit — (1891-1971) a talented stained-glass artist who later in his life documented the building of Parker Dam, working as a professional photographer. He was recognized by his peers as one of the most talented craftsmen and artists of his time.

Levitts — (?)

Mr. Wolf — (?)

Halapai Tiger- an insect, often called the Kissing Bug and also known as "Conenose Bug". They normally reside in packrat dens.

NAMES FROM ENTRIES NOT SELECTED :

Frost — (?) worked at the Naturalist department

Shorty Rowen — (?) filled the station water tank

Hubbs Chase-Foreman

ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS:

From PART 1:

Edgar Craven — Edgar Malin Craven (1891-1960) banker and accomplished artist.

From PART 7:

Supt. Branch — NPS Chuck Wahler writes, "William E. Branch arrived at Petrified Forest, N.M. on April 7, 1944 as Acting Superintendent and continued in this role through the end of Feb. 1946, when he was transferred (the first time) to Platt

National Park in Oklahoma. (Platt was originally known as Sulphur Springs Reservation, est. in 1902.) Thomas Whitecraft was P. Forest's Superintendent from 1940-1950, however he was away in military service from October 1943 through March 1946 (?) Branch returned in 1950 as a full superintendent. He arrived on Sept. 3, 1950 and was transferred on December 31, 1955 to Platt.

Porter Tinichise — Don Schellbach writes "Porter's last name was spelled Timeche and pronounced the same. He was a Hopi Indian and Hopi Clan Chief who lived in the Hopi House. He was a rug weaver and was later promoted to sales. He had three children; daughters Lavern the oldest, Betty the youngest and a son, Billy." Don writes, "Betty and I were about the same age and went to school together. Billy was older, but I ran around with him later on. Billy was a big hit as a dancer at the Indian Dances held at the Hopi House. "

Dr. Lyman Benson — U.S. American botanist at Pomona College, Claremont, CA.

Gaustad — Joe Gaustad, Electrician. See attached memo below, provided by GCHS member, Dove Menkes. GCHS member Shirley Patrick also writes that Gaustad was the CCC worker who installed the telephone lines across the canyon. He had a "helper", but Joe basically did the installation himself because the "helper" wouldn't do the job to Joe's satisfaction. Hikers today can still see the old phone lines through the main corridor. Shirley continues..."I still can't in my wildest dreams picture how Joe ever got those "pipes" up on the rocks-installed the posts-and strung the line!" Gaustad is buried in the Grand Canyon cemetery.


Look for the rest of 1945 in a future issue of "The Ol' Pioneer"

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA

September 5, 1945.

MEMORANDUM for the Files.

On August 22, Assistant Chief Ranger Brown and Electrician Joe Gaustad reported to me the finding of a ruin and much pottery south of the East Rim Drive, about 500 yards east of the road to the powder storage. They brought in two broken pots, practically complete, and reported more of them. Park Naturalist Schellbach visited the site on August 23; and on August 24 took photographs, marked the site, and collected the exposed pot sherds. Apparently the ruin is as large - or larger - than Tusayan. It is heavily overgrown with trees; but in the exposed portion heavy rains had uncovered the broken pots of one room, where they had lain covered for centuries. Probably the date of the ruin is around 1100-1200 A.D. Park Naturalist Schellbach reports the pottery is the best yet found in the park. About a dozen food bowls and ceremonial jars were procured from an area 15 x 20 feet, practically all capable of easy repair. The site is within 200 yards off a main highway, and the telephone line runs along one side of it, yet apparently no one has stumbled on the ruins heretofore.


H. C. Bryant,
Superintendent.

Le Conte Plateau

by Dov Menkes

The USGS Geographic Names System has:
Named in early 1908 by Dr. Arnold Guyot, for the geologist, Professor Joseph Le Conte who took observations for him with a stationary barometer during their exploration of the area.

Le Conte did not make observations for Guyot and neither was ever at the Grand Canyon.

Guyot was born in Switzerland in 1802. He came to the US in 1848 and was a professor at Princeton University. He died in 1884.

Le Conte was born in Georgia in 1823. He received degrees and taught in the south. He left for California in 1869, where he taught at the University of California, Berkeley. In

1885 and 1886 he visited in northern California and Oregon with Dutton. He was a member of the Sierra Club and a friend of John Muir. He died in his beloved Yosemite in 1901.¹

There are several geographical names of Guyot and Le Conte, in the U.S. Places were often named after prominent scientists. I have not learned who proposed Le Conte for the Grand Canyon.

Grand Canyon Place Names were often taken from classical mythology, ie, *Apollo Temple, Venus Temple, Cheops Pyramid...* After the Matthes-Evans map was published, there was a backlash from those who thought Native American and Local names should have been used. Many scientists and interested parties (like Fred Harvey) protested.

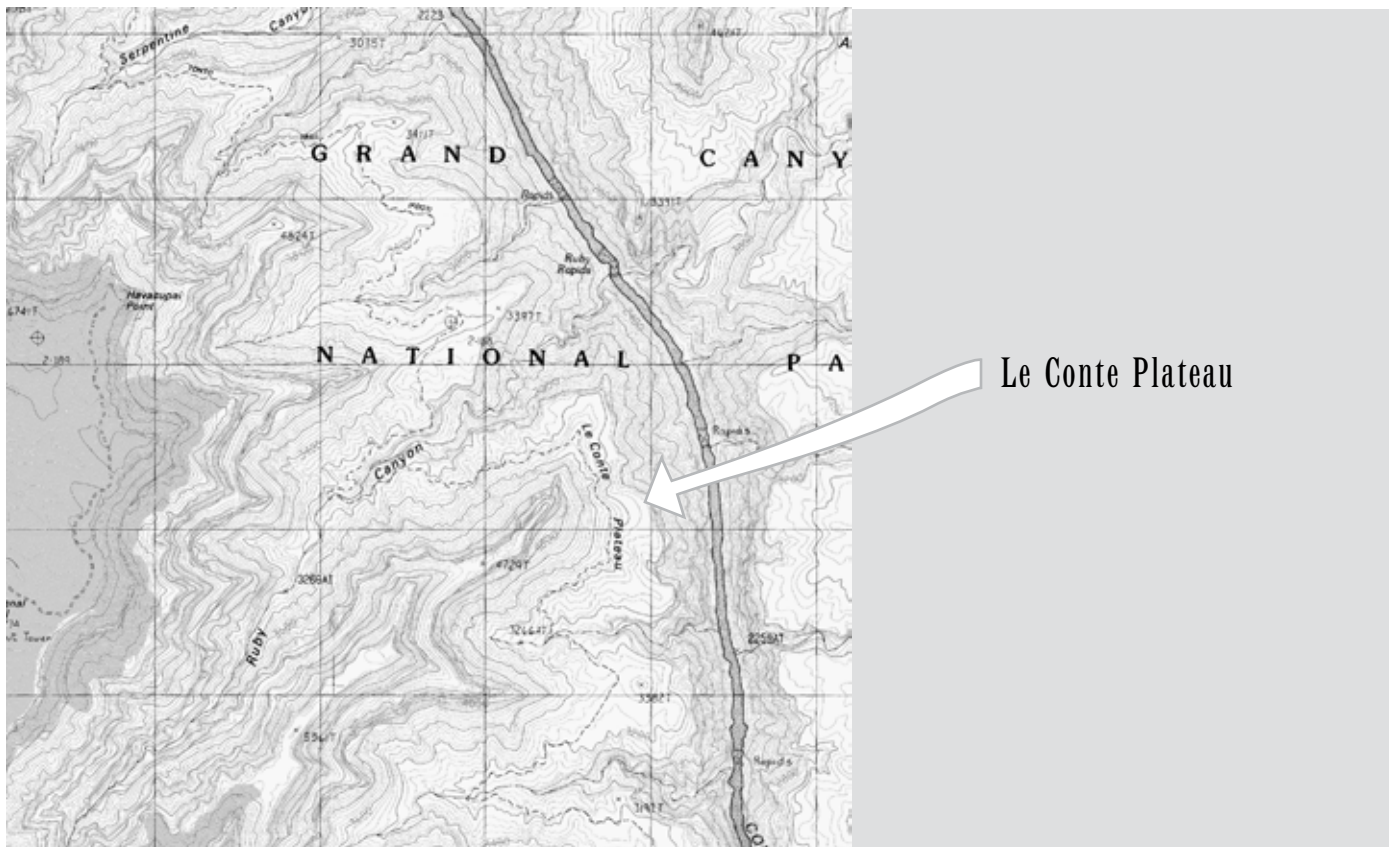
In a 1934 letter to Will Croft Barnes, who was compiling *Arizona*

Place Names, Dellenbaugh mentions that "Dutton started the naming of features after Orientals with Vishnu Temple, Shiva Temple, Zoroastor Temple. He did not like Indian Names—thought them ugly. I had several arguments with him on the subject as I objected violently to the Oriental and Egyptian nomenclature. I have objected ever since..."²

In the 1920s the USGS solicited substitute names. Many were submitted, however, there were considerable publications, maps, with the existing names. So it was decided to leave the names as is.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Detailed biographies are on the web.
- 2 Barnes Collection, Arizona Historical Society.



No Time for the River: Thomas Wolfe's Experience of the Grand Canyon

by Don Lago

When the Sierra Club published its photos-and-quotes format book on the Grand Canyon in 1964, its title, *Time and the River Flowing*, contained an echo obvious to any literary-minded reader. Twenty-nine years previously, Thomas Wolfe's novel *Of Time and the River* was one of the biggest literary events of the 1930s. *Of Time and the River* was still widely read in 1964.

Thomas Wolfe's greatest strength as a novelist was his gift for lyricism, a Whitmanesque poetic flowing. Wolfe was especially noted for his images of youthful longing, of the hunger for experience, and of the brevity of life. No other writer could match Wolfe at turning railroad trains into symbols of youthful dreams of distant places and adventures. Wolfe also loved to use rivers as symbols of time flowing, symbols of life's energy, beauty, mystery, and unstoppable passing:

The great river burned there in his vision in that light of fading day, and it was hung there in that spell of silence and forever, and it was flowing on forever, and it was stranger than a legend, and as dark as time.¹

Always the rivers run, and always there will be great ships upon the tide, always great horns are baying at the harbor's mouth, and in the night a thousand men have died, while the river, always the river, the dark eternal river, full of strange secret time, washing the city's stains away, thickened and darkened by its dumpings, is flowing by us, by us, to the sea.²

And in the nighttime, in the dark, in all the sleeping silence of the earth, the river, the dark

rich river, full of strange time, dark time, strange tragic time, is flowing, flowing out to sea!³

These examples may also give you a clue about Wolfe's greatest weakness as a novelist. His high energy wasn't balanced by much sense of limits or form. Even after his editor, the famous Max Perkins, who was also the editor-mentor-confidant of Hemingway and Fitzgerald, labored to give form to Wolfe's flood of prose, Wolfe's novels, starting with *Look Homeward, Angel* in 1929, remained rambling and excessive. Wolfe's admirers held that his appetite for life was marvelously Faustian, but others found his musings about life and time and fate to be merely adolescent gushings. In the 1930s Wolfe was often hailed as the equal of the best American writers of the time—but it was a time when stream-of-consciousness in novels counted for more than did architectural grace, and Wolfe's stream could be murky indeed, and wildly out of its banks.

Near the end of its nearly 1,000 pages, Wolfe's *Of Time and the River* includes a mention of the Colorado River, as part of his hailing the great rivers of America:

By the waters of life, by time, by time: the names of great mouths, the mighty maws, the vast, wet, coiling, never-glutted and unending snakes that drink the continent. Where, sons of men, and in what other land will you find others like them, and where can you match the mighty music of their names?—the Monongahela, the Colorado, The Rio Grande, the Columbia [Wolfe names another twenty rivers], these are a few of their princely names, these are a few of their great, proud, glittering names, fit for the immense and lonely land that they inhabit.

Oh, Tiber! Father Tiber! You'd only be a suckling in that mighty land!⁴

It's a bit curious, then, that in the Sierra Club book that almost steals Wolfe's title, and that includes seventy-two literary quotes, there is no quote from Thomas Wolfe, no mention of him at all. Most of the quotes are from nature writers and conservationists. Joseph Wood Krutch provided thirteen quotes, Loren Eiseley eleven quotes. Grand Canyon explorers John Wesley Powell and Clarence Dutton each provided nine quotes. There was almost no presence of American novelists, only John Steinbeck with two quotes.

Thomas Wolfe should have been well-attuned to nature and rivers. He was born and grew up in Asheville, North Carolina, perhaps the most famous resort town in the Appalachian Mountains, to which people came from New York City and other discordant cities to rest themselves in nature. I once followed the French Broad River through Asheville, driving to a section of the French Broad famous for its kayaking, and as I looked up the hill at the Riverside Cemetery where Wolfe was buried, I imagined that I would be kayaking a literary river, with philosophical flows and rocks and holes. Wolfe seemed a better prospect for appreciating nature than any novelist of his generation. Writers like Steinbeck and Dos Passos were preoccupied with Great Depression social injustices. City boys like Fitzgerald barely noticed nature, or, like Hemingway, saw nature mainly as a stage for macho posturing. Faulkner wasn't even inclined to see a river as a symbol of time's progress, for after 1865, Southerners had ceased believing in progress and were stuck in the knots of convoluted history.

In *Of Time and the River*, Wolfe's autobiographical character expresses interest in the American West: "I will go up and down the country, and back and forth across the country on the great trains that thunder over America. I will go out West where States are square; oh, I will go to Boise, and Helena and Albuquerque."⁵

A few months after *Of Time and the River* was published, Wolfe took his first trip west, and made the first of two visits to the Grand Canyon. His main purpose in going west was to attend a writer's conference at the University of Colorado, but afterward he took the train across the Southwest to California. A handful of postcards Wolfe sent to Max Perkins offer a few glimpses of Wolfe's reactions. From Greeley, Colorado, on July 30, 1935, Wolfe sent Perkins a postcard showing Rocky Mountain National Park: "Dear Max: I've seen no mountains yet but the West is wonderful—blazing hot, but crystal air, blue skies—The journey across the country was overwhelming—I've never begun to say what I ought to say about it—Tom"⁶ Three weeks later Wolfe sent Perkins a postcard of the cliff dwellings of Puye, New Mexico: "Dear Max: This is the most magnificent country—wild, arid, friendly, magnificent—just the way I always knew it would be."⁷ On August 28 Wolfe had arrived at the Grand Canyon and sent Perkins a postcard with a Gunnar Widforss canyon painting: "Dear Max: You can get no idea of this from a post card but, it is stirring and incredible—I begin to see how inadequate all I have said and written about this country really is."⁸ Wolfe seemed to be responding to the glories of nature, but then, from Reno, Wolfe sent a postcard showing casino gambling tables: "This is no exaggeration—there are dozens of these places—wide open and going full blast all night long—The West is glorious."⁹

Three years later Wolfe had another chance to see the Grand Canyon. He was in Portland, Oregon, starting a vacation in the Pacific Northwest, when he ran into Edwin Miller, the

editor of *The Portland Oregonian*. The two hit it off, partly because Miller's wife came from a town next door to Wolfe's Asheville. Miller and Ray Conway, the director of the Oregon State Motor Association, were planning a 2-week marathon tour of Western national parks, mainly to prove that the West's fast-growing network of paved highways made long-distance tourism a practical possibility. They planned to visit thirteen national parks in a loop that led south through California, to the Grand Canyon, north through Utah, to Yellowstone and Glacier, then west to Mt. Rainier. They invited Wolfe along. Wolfe realized that such a trip would be hit-and-run at thirteen parks "without seeing any of them,"¹⁰ but this was just the sort of gluttonous experience of life that Wolfe loved. Wolfe didn't know how to drive, so he rode in the back seat and kept a notebook that was later published as *A Western Journal*. Wolfe's notes were brief jottings, so perhaps it is not entirely fair to judge Wolfe's perceptions by these notes, but they do give us his unedited reactions and a sense of what Wolfe found noteworthy.

Wolfe and friends left Portland on June 20, 1938, and on June 23 they crossed the Colorado River at Needles. Wolfe had been noticing rivers along the way. The Klamath River was "a thread of silver river in the desert."¹¹ With the Sacramento River Wolfe was fascinated by how Western rivers snake through canyons, but then he got distracted by the trains along the river: "And now down into canyon of the Sacramento in among the lovely Siskiyou and all through the morning down and down and down the canyon, and the road snaking, snaking always with a thousand little punctual gashes, and the freight trains and the engines turned backward with the cars in front."¹² Approaching Yosemite, he followed "breath taking curves and steepness and sheer drops down below into a canyon cut a mile below by great knives blades..."¹³

Finally Wolfe arrived at the

Colorado River, the ultimate knife's blade revealing deep time. Yet Wolfe seemed mainly interested in the scorching Mohave Desert: "...and so out of Needles—and through heat blasted air along the Colorado 15 miles or so and then across the river into Arizona—pause for [agricultural] inspection, all friendly and immediate—then into the desert world of Arizona—the heat blasted air—the desert mountain slopes clear in view and more devilish..."¹⁴

Wolfe was fascinated by the shapes and colors of the desert, but repeatedly called the desert "fiendish." Again his attention was riveted by a train: "And far away immeasurably far the almost moveless plume of black of engine smoke and the double header freight advancing—advancing moveless—moving through timeless time and on and on across the immense plain backed by more immensities of fiendish mountain slopes..."¹⁵

Throughout the journey Wolfe, coming from the all-green Appalachians, was reassured to find areas of greenness and cultivation amid the rock and desert. Rising onto the Colorado Plateau, Wolfe appreciated the rising forests: "Slopes no longer fiend troubled but now friendly, forested familiar..."¹⁶

Wolfe and friends were hoping to reach the Grand Canyon by sunset, but it was almost dark when they arrived at the Bright Angel Lodge. Then, for the first of ten times in his journal, Wolfe began referring to the canyon with an odd nickname: "the Big Gorgooby" or "the Old Gorgooby." Twice he would call the Little Colorado River Gorge "the Small Gorgooby." Only three times would he use the name "Grand Canyon." The word "gorgooby" does have the ring of "gorge." Was "gorgooby" some kind of Appalachian slang? To track down this possibility I contacted over a dozen scholars of Thomas Wolfe and Appalachian folklore, but none of them could identify any source for it. They also said that Wolfe was not in the habit of inventing nicknames for places. Twenty years after their



trip with Wolfe, Ray Conway wrote to Ed Miller reminiscing about it, and he said he had been puzzled to hear Wolfe speaking the phrase "Big Gorgooby" and asked Wolfe what he meant, and Wolfe said that he had just invented this name for the canyon; he wasn't sure why; it just seemed to fit.

It may be a poet's job to invent a new language for things, but to people who find grandeur in the Grand Canyon, the phrase "Big Gorgooby" hardly seems an advance in dignity. It sounds more like the flippant pop slang of the next generation's Tom Wolfe, the author of *The Right Stuff*. "Gooby" rings of "goober," the old country slang for peanut, a silly echo for the Grand Canyon.

Wolfe approached the canyon rim and saw "the Big Gorgooby there immensely, darkly, almost weirdly there—a fathomless darkness peered at from the very edge of hell with abysmal starlight—almost unseen—just fathomlessly there..."¹⁷

There's some intensity here, some poetry, some effort to grasp the canyon. But the thing that stands out most is Wolfe's calling the canyon rim "the very edge of hell." Fifty years before, when Americans were first encountering the Grand Canyon, it was common to hear people reacting negatively to the canyon and the rest of the desert Southwest, whose naked rock violated the standards of green natural beauty defined by European

Romanticism. But by 1938, writers like John Muir and artists like Thomas Moran, and of course the tourism-minded Santa Fe Railway, had spent decades trying to redefine the Southwest as a landscape of beauty and grandeur. Thomas Wolfe can be forgiven for finding the Mohave Desert "fiendish" when he was in a car without air conditioning in 110-degree heat, but his insistence on seeing the Grand Canyon as "the very edge of hell" is an odd anachronism.

Nevertheless, this seems a promising start for Wolfe's encounter with *time and the river*. Yet soon Wolfe was more interested in the lodging facilities, as he often was on the trip: "So to our cabin—and delightful service—and so to dinner in the Lodge...Fred Harvey's ornate wigwam—and to dinner here—and then to walk along the rim of the Big Gorgooby and inspect the big hotel—and at the stars innumerable and immense above the Big Gorgooby."¹⁸

In the morning, "a deer outside the window cropping grass" woke Wolfe up.¹⁹ This day Wolfe and friends traveled from the South Rim to the North Rim. They stopped at the Yavapai museum, where "the Ranger along and looked through observation glasses at Old Gorgooby and unvital time."²⁰

Unvital time? Perhaps Wolfe meant the nonliving, unmoving rocks of geological time. Of course, to a geologist, rocks are full of vitality. Wolfe was more interested in the geologist-ranger: "Alberdene the young geologist with crisp-curly hair and cheery personality who talked and remembered me from 3 yr. ago—an Arizona PhD and at Harvard too—but now wants no more teaching and applies for Philippines—so down to Lookout Tower where the caravan streams in and listens to lecture by young Ranger Columbia and into tower and all the people—the Eastern cowboy with Fred Harvey hat and shirt and cowgirl with broad hat, and wet red mouth, blonde locks and riding breeches filled with buttock..."²¹

Throughout the trip Wolfe was

more interested in people than in the landscape. Wolfe was, after all, a novelist, always in search of interesting characters. He had a quick eye too, nailing "the Eastern cowboy with Fred Harvey hat."

Wolfe went to Cameron, still a genuine and rustic trading post, and had "lunch in an Indian Lodge-ee..." Then at Marble Canyon Wolfe had one more chance to see the Colorado River, see some truly profound *time and the river*, but Wolfe reported only: "—and now the gorge, much smaller down, of Big Gorgooby, and the Navajo Bridge—and the Gorgooby, brown-red-yellow—a mere 1000 feet or so below—and on and on across Big Gorgooby now through desert land..."²²

Wolfe was cheered to climb back into the forests. The meadows on the way to the North Rim were "a golf course big and narrow on both sides."²³ He arrived at the North Rim in time to see "the tremendous twilight of the Big Gorgooby"²⁴ In the morning he was fascinated by the ritual of the lodge staff singing songs to departing guests: "Sound of waitresses and maids singing farewell songs—"till we meet again" etc—to passengers departing on buses—Traveling U.P. sentiment and C declared there were tears in eyes of the passengers and some of the girls—Into Lodge for view from terrace of the Big Gorgooby in first light—and glorious!—and glorious!—wrote half dozen post cards in brilliant sunlight as before—then into breakfast..."²⁵ In his journal he wrote more observations on rangers, tourists, and staff, and that was it for the Grand Canyon. They were off to Zion, where the tourists were "awed by nature dutifully,"²⁶ and Bryce, where Wolfe "peeked in at the inevitable Ranger and the attentive dutiful sourpusses listening to the inevitable lecture—Flora and Fauna of Bryce Canyon."²⁷

Wolfe did not seem to consider it his duty to be awed by nature. For the rest of the trip, in spite of flashes of emotional and poetic reaction to nature, Wolfe remained more interested in people than in nature,

more in towns, farms, hotels, and trains than in deserts and canyons. He continued taking note of rivers, but as “the miraculousness of water in the west,” not as the powerful gods of a geological epic full of deep time and amazing events.²⁸ Wolfe’s Grand Canyon postcard to Max Perkins three years previously, announcing that “I begin to see how inadequate all I have said and written about this country really is,” was not followed up by any adequate writing about the Grand Canyon. Wolfe’s nickname, “the Big Gorgooby,” was not only inadequate but plain stupid. The Cameron Trading Post too was not cute enough for Wolfe, so he turned it into a “Lodge-ee.” The North Rim’s alpine meadows were merely “a golf course.” Wolfe even mocked tourists for caring about nature. Compared with the experience of other writers—Powell, Dutton, Muir, Van Dyke—Wolfe’s experience of the Grand Canyon was as shallow as an Esplanade puddle.

We’ll never know if Wolfe’s trip and notes and flashes of poetry might have developed into a deeper perception of the land. Soon after reaching Seattle, Wolfe developed pneumonia, which reactivated his childhood tuberculosis, which infected his brain and soon killed him. Wolfe’s western journal was the last manuscript he wrote.

In spite of his Asheville roots, Thomas Wolfe belonged to a literary culture that was smugly urban. When Wolfe wrote all those evocative images of trains heading for a life of adventure, the trains weren’t heading west; they were heading for New York City and Boston. The river in his images wasn’t a wild western river; it was often merely the Hudson, full of freighters and pollution. Wolfe’s river was hardly even a real river, but simply a literary symbol of life flowing along. Wolfe came of literary age during the Lost Generation, when even New York City was an inadequate address for writers, and they felt obligated to head for Paris. Wolfe too headed for Europe after college, and in *Of Time*

and *the River* he spent over 200 pages roaming European cities. Yet even the Paris-loving Ernest Hemingway thought Wolfe needed to get out into the real world. In *Green Hills of Africa*, Hemingway prescribed: “I wondered if it would make a writer of him, give him the necessary shock to cut the over-flow of words and give him a sense of proportion, if they sent Tom Wolfe to Siberia or the Dry Tortugas.”²⁹ Or to the Grand Canyon?

It is at least symbolic that Thomas Wolfe’s strongest critic, who defined the whole critical case against Wolfe in a 1936 *Saturday Review* essay called “Genius is Not Enough,” was Bernard De Voto. When De Voto wasn’t reviewing novels he was a nature lover and conservationist. De Voto played a major role in the 1950s battle over whether the rivers continued flowing in Dinosaur National Monument. It was this battle that gave birth to the Sierra Club’s series of photos-and-quotes format books, which a decade later produced *Time and the River Flowing*. De Voto would have found it ironic indeed that the novel he scorned lent its title to the cause he loved. De Voto’s basic complaint against Wolfe was that his characters weren’t real, that their actions and emotions and musings were badly overwrought. Given De Voto’s grounding in real nature, his complaint that Wolfe was not connected with reality could be extrapolated to apply to Wolfe’s failure to connect with the Grand Canyon.

Yet this failure wasn’t simply Thomas Wolfe’s personal failure. It was the failure of the literary culture to which he belonged, a culture in which Paris cafes or the proletarian struggle were the real world, not nature. The literary culture of the 1920s and 1930s was largely oblivious of literary nature writing; almost no one read *Walden*, or had even heard of it. The art world was dominated by abstraction; even the walls in Greenwich Village would be humiliated to be seen with a western landscape painting. Wolfe was seeing the West through the eyes of a novelist, seeing lots of

colorful characters, yet not seeing the West’s main message to humans: that amid vast, ancient landscapes that included grand rivers and canyons and time, the human story is a minor detail. Indeed, Wolfe actively resisted this message by focusing on hotels and trains. In *Of Time and the River* Wolfe had thought of the West as “where States are square,” defining it by the most abstract of human impositions upon it. He had thought of the West as Boise and Helena and Albuquerque, not as Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon. Wolfe’s disconnection from nature was symptomatic of the American disconnection that would make it so difficult for conservationists like Bernard De Voto to explain why the rivers should continue flowing in Dinosaur, Glen Canyon, and the Grand Canyon.

Wolfe became ill only two days after the end of his western journey, and it’s likely that the journey’s exhausting pace contributed to his death. Wolfe was eulogized partly as the great writer he could have become. Perhaps if Wolfe had lived, if he had managed to absorb the message of his “Siberia,” he might have applied his gift for lyricism—a gift that was greater than that of many famous nature writers—to the flowing of real time and real rivers, time and rivers as real and deep as the Grand Canyon.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Thomas Wolfe, *A Stone, A Leaf, A Door* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1945), page 77. Copyright © 1951 by Edward Aswell, Administrator C.T. A., Estate of Thomas Wolfe. Copyright Renewed 1979 by Paul Gitlin, Administrator C.T.A., Estate of Thomas Wolfe.
- 2 Ibid, p 71.
- 3 Ibid, p 156.
- 4 Wolfe, *Of Time and the River* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935), p 868.
- 5 Ibid, p 157.
- 6 Thomas Wolfe and Max Perkins, *To Loot My Life Clean: The Thomas Wolfe-Maxwell Perkins Correspondence*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and Park Bucker (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), p 168.
- 7 Ibid, p 174.
- 8 Ibid, p 175.

9 Ibid, p 179.
 10 Thomas Wolfe, *A Western Journal* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1951), p 5.
 11 Ibid, p 5.
 12 Ibid, p 6.
 13 Ibid, p 10.
 14 Ibid, p 15.
 15 Ibid, p 16.

16 Ibid, p 17.
 17 Ibid, p 18.
 18 Ibid, p 19.
 19 Ibid, p 19.
 20 Ibid, p 19.
 21 Ibid, p 20.
 22 Ibid, p 21.
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24 Ibid, p 22.
 25 Ibid, p 23.
 26 Ibid, p 27.
 27 Ibid, p 30.
 28 Ibid, p 34.
 29 Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p 71.

Remberances

Canyon Don'ts

At El Tovar obey the clerk
 To early rise take care
 At latest eight...and don't be late
 Unless you feed on air.

Don't let them send you out at 9
 To take a canyon drive,
 (To learn to sneeze and see some trees
 And circulate a \$5.00.)

When standing on the canyon brink
 Pray go no further — Stop!
 DON'T brave the lunge and take the
 plunge
 Or stock in life will drop.

When writing in this little book
 Keep safely from the truth
 DON'T knock...be wise... 'twill
 advertise
 But green, untutored youth.

Arthur J. Ryan
December 6, 1905

From the "Impressions" book at El Tovar
 submitted by Carol Naille

My first visit to Grand Canyon, like many baby boomers, occurred in the 1950s. I remember arriving at the train depot with my parents, shouldering a small suitcase and trudging up the hill to the El Tovar, only to discover that our room was down the rim at the Bright Angel Lodge. My father, anxious about his room for the night, dragged us through the parking lot, past Colter Hall and down to the Bright Angel. My mother, afraid of heights, noticed the wide expanse of AIR to our right and grabbed hold of me tightly. Ah, yes... that must be the Grand Canyon. And so it was.

Later, outside the Bright Angel, we watched the sunset. Pretty colors, strange and constantly changing cliffs—but as for me, well, I was just a kid of nine, we were headed for Disneyland, and the canyon seemed very much like just a big hole in the ground. Like so many things in life it was nice but no big deal—just a stop on our trip west. Little did I know that when I returned a second time—the view had not changed, but I had.

In 1973, my husband and I moved to the South Rim. He ran the transportation desk at the Bright Angel Lodge and was responsible for the mule rides into the canyon. I worked in the Bright Angel Curio Shop and I spent my half-hour lunch sitting on the rim—in awe of this wonder of the world. Up the hill, there

was a large log building—El Tovar they called it. We had eaten lunch there once—reheated frozen Mexican food... and a little dry at that.

That winter my husband moved his transportation desk up to El Tovar and I would occasionally visit the hotel to meet him for lunch or just hang around and watch the tourists. I sat beside the roaring fireplace, looked at the animal trophies, admired the dark wood floors and began to wonder who built it? And why? Yet, the canyon still had a hold on me and I would wander along the rim between the El Tovar and Bright Angel, admiring the changing scene. I was no longer a kid of nine, headed for Disneyland, but someone who was sinking her roots ever so slowly into a place that had not changed and would always be there for me.

In 1986, we moved to Flagstaff and I visit the canyon infrequently. But, when I do return, I find it unchanged and a special place not just for its beauty but for the people who have inhabited its buildings, walked between Bright Angel and El Tovar, and come to love—as we locals call it—"the big hole."

Carol Naille
January 18, 1994



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