



Grand Canyon Pioneers Society - Monthly Bulletin - September 1999

GCPS Meetings for 1999

September John Westerlund, our scholarship awardee for last year and this year, will
18: show slides and tell us about his doctoral project on the World War II prisoners at Navajo Depot and the Japanese internees at Leupp. We'll meet for lunch at Furr's Cafeteria in Flagstaff at 11:30 AM and afterwards make our way to the meeting room. The presentation will be in the Liberal Arts Building at Northern Arizona University at 1:00 PM in Room 135. In case you do not come to the lunch, the Liberal Arts Building is on the north campus, Building 18. Parking is in Lot 10. Room 135 is on the north end of the building, first floor. Maps are available at most campus entrances.

October
16: Annual Meeting

November Plans are in the making for a first ever meeting of the Grand Canyon
13: Pioneers in Tucson. We'll start with our own personally guided tour of the Arizona State Historical Society museum from 10:30 to 11:30 AM. After lunch in a nearby restaurant, we'll gather in the Historical Society Boardroom for two presentations. Ruth Stephens Baker will talk about her climb up Shiva Tempe with Emery Kolb. Then Betty Leavengood will show slides from the Bass Collection that is housed at the Historical Society and talk about Ada Bass. We'll come up with some plans for folks staying overnight, so mark your calendar for a visit to the Old Pueblo.

December: No meeting

The Weather and The Grand Canyon Pioneers Society

The weatherman said Saturday would be sunny and warm, but who can believe what they say, after all it was the day of a Pioneer hike into the backcountry, and it always rains on these occasions. Six of the Pioneers journeyed to Winslow Friday night and stayed at the newly restored La Pasada Hotel. This was more or less a nostalgic trip as the Pioneers have kept close touch on the life of this old Harvey House since before restoration began, but we will have more on that later.

Those of us at Winslow woke up Saturday to the sound of raindrops splattering against the

window. What more could you expect. We breathed a deep sigh and took off for Two Guns, about twenty miles west of town to meet those members from Flagstaff who gathered at our starting point for the trip. By now the rain had settled down to just a light sprinkle as we listened to our guest leader, Jim Byrkit, tell the story of Chaves Pass and how it came into being.

On November 24, 1863, Brigadier General James H. Carleton gave Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves, 1st Cavalry, New Mexico, orders to escort the newly appointed governor of the Arizona Territory into the area to set up a capitol. This Chaves did. He was also instructed to find a new route that would cut off miles of travel between what are now Prescott, Arizona, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was also ordered to keep a detailed daily report and do what work that would be required to make the road passable. Chaves partially did this.

After delivering the new governor safely, Chaves followed an old Indian trail across the southern part of Central Arizona, then headed toward what is now Winslow. He got lost when he took a wrong turn, but finally reached Albuquerque. He failed to do any work to improve the road and his daily record consisted of only a few almost illegible notes jotted down whenever he thought of it.

Another trip, including Chaves as leader (since he knew the way) followed the first, again Chaves took the wrong path and did no worthwhile work to improve the road. By now there was enough travel that the way could be determined and the route became known as the Chaves Trail. This is the route we followed down to Chaves Pass on Saturday August 14th.

The rain came off and on in light showers as we progressed along the graveled road that soon became a rutted dirt road. We encountered a number of passable soft spots on the way to the pass. Here in the middle of nowhere Ron Werhan, our guide, proclaimed "This is it".

After lunch we took a hike across a deep gully and up a rocky hill to view an ancient Hopi Indian ruin. The area was strewn with shards of monochrome and polychrome pottery. The ruin was apparently a lookout post guarding the pass against attack. Ron explained there were probably similar ruins on top of the hills directly across from where we stood. This has been the case in a number of other areas. By the time we scrambled to the bottom the rains had stopped and we all headed toward Flagstaff and home. In spite of the weather, it was a wonderful trip. It is always fun to be with the Pioneers.

The Bulletin welcomes comments, stories, or Reflections and Remembrances.

Please send them to

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