

GRAND CANYON EXPLORER

Grand Canyon Pioneers Society - Monthly Bulletin

Vol 4, No 9

September 2000

History of Phantom Ranch Outing article submitted by Betty Leavengood

Grand Canyon National Park Ranger Keith Green presented a fascinating history of Phantom Ranch during the August outing at Albright Training Center, Grand Canyon Village.

"I came to the Grand Canyon in 1972 with a new Master's Degree and immediately got a job with the Fred Harvey Company washing dishes at Bright Angel Lodge!" laughed Keith Green as he introduced himself to the group of Pioneers that fought their way through the tourists to hear his talk. After the stint as dishwasher, Keith worked as houseman at El Tovar. Then, from 1975 to 1985, he went to work the concessions at Phantom Ranch for Fred Harvey* and has been there as a ranger this summer. "It's a great place to be if you're single," Keith said. "Your food and lodging is provided." It is also a great place to explore history. "Part of my degree is in history and I started looking into the history of Phantom Ranch. I also talked to people that came down and started collecting oral histories," he explained. Keith told us about the history, accompanied by historic and present-day slide pictures.

The human history of Phantom Ranch began around 1050 A.D. when the prehistoric pueblo people lived in the area. These people farmed where Phantom Ranch is today, where several pit houses and a kiva have been uncovered.

John Wesley Powell came to the Phantom Ranch area in 1869 when his crew stopped where Bright Angel Creek enters the Colorado River. They went up Bright Angel Creek past the site of Phantom Ranch for about three miles where they found a large ponderosa pine log that had washed down from the North Rim. Since Powell had lost one of his oars, they dragged the log all the way back down to the river and, on August 16, 1869, carved an oar from the log.

Next came the prospectors. In 1890, Dan Hogan, owner of the Lost Orphan Mine, spent the winter at Indian Garden with the intention of prospecting across the river. He built a canvas boat and brought it to Indian Garden, but never used it. Instead, he blazed a trail down to the river, that became known as the Miner's Trail, and swam across the river and made his way up to the site of Phantom Ranch. The following year, he and a friend, Henry Ward, went all the way up Bright Angel Canyon to the North Rim, turned around, and came back. "This was the first rim to rim to rim," Keith said.

In the fall of 1892, Henry Ashurst brought a herd of cattle down the Hance Trail and across the Tonto to spend the winter at Indian Garden. He then hiked down to the river, crossed in a boat put together of sticks, and went up Bright Angel Creek to prospect. He

and his men dug out a load of ore and secured some burros to haul it out. Early in 1893, they herded the burros and the cattle back across the Tonto, up the New Hance, and on to Flagstaff. There they learned that the ore was worth less than it would cost them to ship it. "They threw the ore in the streets of Flagstaff," Keith said, "and probably went to the nearest bar." He added, "The streets of Flagstaff have some ore from Bright Angel Canyon under them!"

By 1901, two hunters were drawn into the Canyon by beavers, not ore. Henry and Guffey. They came down the south side, trapped 30 to 40 beavers, and then went out the north side and back to Flagstaff. Later, in 1903, Sidney Farrell and Jim Murray, brought burros with them to trap beavers and then went out the North Rim. "They had a time getting those burros up the north side of the Canyon," Keith said.

Francois Matthes, a government mapmaker, came to the Canyon in 1903 to prepare topographic maps. Matthes still thought that Bright Angel Canyon was a box canyon, so he went down the South Bass and up the North Bass Trails to the North Rim, with horses carrying his equipment. He went over to look at Bright Angel Canyon and thought there should be a way down into the Canyon. As he looked over the rim, who should be coming up but Farrell and Murray! Matthes went down Bright Angel Canyon past the site of Phantom Ranch to the river where there was a prospector with a boat.

Also in 1903, Uncle Dee Woolley ran cattle on the North Rim of the Canyon. He had heard about the train coming to the South Rim and realized that this would mean more tourists. He and his son-in-law, Dave Rust (a graduate of Stanford University), formed the Grand Canyon Transportation Company to bring tourists to hunt on the North Rim. Woolley offered \$500 to Rust to build a trail all the way across the Canyon. Rust went to work and completed a trail down from the North Rim. About a half mile from the Colorado River, he built a little camp consisting of some tents and a table that was behind where the mule barn is today. Then he built a boat to cross the river and continued his trail building in the general route of the South Kaibab until he cut over to Indian Garden to join up with the Bright Angel Trail.

Since Rust and Woolley could not get a mule into a boat, they devised a system. A Grand Canyon Transportation Company representative would meet the train on the South Rim and, when he recruited people to go to North Rim, he would then build signal fires on Yaki Point. five fires meant five people were coming; then a guide would take five mules down to meet the tourists. While this system worked, it took a lot of work to carry out the plan, so Woolley decided to build a cable car across the river, which was completed in 1906. When Theodore Roosevelt went to the North Rim to hunt lion in 1913, he thought the cable car was "bully good", and he rode back and forth twice and then helped pull other people across. After Roosevelt's visit, Rust Camp became known as Roosevelt Camp.

The Park Service was assigned to administer the Grand Canyon in 1919, and they decided to improve the river crossing by building what Keith called the "flimsy bridge." The bridge was, in reality, a swinging bridge and only could be used by one mule or one person at a time. The first week the bridge was in use, it flipped over in the wind. In 1925, the bridge fell in the river and had to be rebuilt.

When Fred Harvey got the concession in 1923, the decision was made to build a dude ranch at the bottom of the Canyon, which was designed by Mary Colter. Since everything was taken down by mules, she used mainly rocks. The Park Service used her designs in many other national parks. Colter changed the name from Roosevelt Camp to Phantom

Ranch, named after Phantom Creek, which is in a narrow little canyon that cannot be seen from the rim. thus the name "Phantom." Over the next 10 years, eight more cabins and a dining hall were added. By 1928, it became obvious that a new bridge was needed to replace the "flimsy bridge." The Park Service hired 42 Havasupai Indians to carry down ten 440 feet long cables to build a new suspension bridge. They left the old bridge up until the new one was completed. The workers tunneled through the cliff, starting on opposite ends. Unfortunately, they did not meet head on and the entrance to the tunnel is pitch black. Mules do not like to walk into complete darkness and new mules have to be trained to enter the tunnel.

In 1929, the fall of the stock market sent the country into a deep depression. The Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) was formed in the early 1930s to give people work during the depression. The CCC troop assigned to the Canyon spent the summer on the North Rim and the winter at Phantom Ranch. They built the River Trail, the Clear Creek Trail, and the trail from Ribbon Falls to Upper Ribbon Falls. The CCC workers were housed in what is now Bright Angel Campground and were not allowed to come across the river to Phantom Ranch because of the dangers there --- alcohol and girls!! They were allowed across the creek, however, to build a swimming pool.

The 1920s and 1930s were the golden years at Phantom Ranch. Mainly wealthy guests came to the ranch. A typical evening would be a good meal followed by relaxing around the pool. Cowboys would sometimes sing and play their instruments and lead sing-a-longs. this was the beginning of the cowboy band.

Things changed in the 1950s. More and more people came to Phantom Ranch because hiking became popular. Over the 1964 Easter weekend, 1,000 people showed up at Phantom Ranch, initiating the permit system.

The hippies of the 1960s looked on the pool as a symbol of "bourgeoisie capitalism at the bottom of the people's national park" and trashed it. The health department discovered that the pool was not chlorinated and changes were required. It became hard to keep it operating to suit the health department and because of the vandalism, so by 1969, the Park Service quit filling the pool with water and in 1971 filled the pool with dirt, rocks, and debris.

Phantom Ranch is still a piece of civilization in the midst of the wilderness and as such it attracts wildlife. One time, the cooks kept finding Almond Joy wrappers on the floor of the kitchen in the mornings and couldn't figure out what was going on. Finally, one evening, the cowboys and some staff members were playing poker in the dining room when they heard a noise in the kitchen. turned out the ringtail cats were helping themselves to Almond Joy bars, even though they had their choice of Milky Way, and other brands. As Keith said, "It's hard to get coconut in the bottom of the Canyon."

Today, Phantom Ranch is a mecca for hikers from all over the world. This summer, they are being treated to great stories by Keith.

* Keith worked on the North Rim during the summer of 1982 where he met his wife Nancy.

GCPS Meetings for 2000

September Condor Release Program presentation by Robert Mesta of the Fish and
16: Wildlife Service.

Time: 11:30 A.M.

Place: Marble Canyon Restaurant

for lunch, and then go a few hundred yards to a meeting room behind the convenience store to hear the presentation.

After driving this far, why not spend the weekend at the North Rim? To make weekend reservations at the North Rim Lodge call 1-303-297-2757 or at Marble Canyon call 1-520-355-2225. Reservations have been made for dinner at the North Rim Lodge Dining Room. Make overnight reservations soon if you plan to go, as North Rim accommodations are limited.

October Annual Board Meeting at:

21:

Time: 12:00 Noon

Place: Perkins Family Restaurant
1900 S. Milton Road, Flagstaff.

Board will have space reserved for them in separate area for lunch and board meeting. Other members will find tables separate from the Board.

A talk by Tom Martin about Day Hikes From The River and a report from the Board at:

Time: 1:30 PM

Place: La Quinta Inn
2015 S. Beulah Boulevard

November Rescues and other mishaps in the Canyon by Ken Phillips, head of Search
18: and Rescue at the South Rim, and Bil Vandergraff, backcountry ranger at the South Rim. Meet at Poco Diablo Resort at 1736 Highway 179 in Sedona at 12:00 Noon for lunch. The presentation will be at 1:00 PM. Don't miss this exciting talk.

December: No meeting

Grand Canyon Gamble excerpt from August 17, 2000 Tucson Citizen

No unprepared human - and that includes world-class athletes - can beat the Canyon, says Margee Hench of the Grand Canyon office. Furthermore, preparation is never an exact science.

This past spring, a group of Belgian track and field athletes took elaborate preparations and still ran out of water after three days and had to be rescued. And six Lehigh University soccer players went down the canyon and two ended up unconscious. Then there was the recent bizarre account of a hiker who ran out of water and began hallucinating. Learn about these search and rescue efforts and others at the November GCPS outing.

Cleanup Project

The Grand Canyon Pioneers along with the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association and the Grand Canyon Hikers and Backpackers Association will clean up the cemetery at the South Rim on Saturday October 7 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 or 3:00 PM.

Bring gloves, hat, and bag lunch The Park Service will have water, Gatorade, and possibly snacks on hand. If you don't have an annual pass, mention that you are taking part in the cemetery cleanup and they will let you in free at the entrances.

The Park Service will provide a campsite at the Mather Campground on both Friday and Saturday nights for the participants.

September Birthdays

Jim Ohlman
Tom Carmony
William F. May
Mike Anderson
Amy Frizzell
Rich Holtzin
William Hurley Jack Greening
Susan Olberding
Dick Brown
Jeanne Schick
Shirley Patrick
Jack Greening
Doug Brown

Sympathy

We are sorry to hear about the passing of our member Catharine Acheson on August 9th.

New Member

Mary S. Barnes - Grand Canyon, AZ

Board Nominations

Four individuals will be on the ballot for the October 2000 election of three Board of Directors for a three (3) year term:

Mike Anderson
John Azar
Mary Ellen Hamilton
Bob Ribokas

Outings Contacts Information

Outings Coordinator:

Betty Leavengood
6045 Edison St.
Tucson AZ 85712
520-885-3570
HikerBetty@aol.com

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

Please send them to

Diane Cassidy
8540 North Central Avenue #27

Phoenix, AZ 85020

or e-mail them to Diane@grandcanyonbooks.com

[[Grand Canyon Home](#) | [Grand Canyon Pioneers Society](#)]

*Copyright © Bob Ribokas, 1994-2000, all rights reserved. This publication and its text and photos may not be copied for commercial use without the express written permission of **[Bob Ribokas](#)**.*