

A Short Story About A Short River

by **Bill Suran**

Saturday January 15, thirty-three members of the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society invaded Sedona where Jeanne and Fred Schick were our hosts. People just kept coming, to make it the largest group ever. Was it because there was food available (that is one thing that we all enjoy) or was it because of our guest speaker? Those who attended were: **Mike and Linda Anderson, Bill and Sibyl Suran, Marie Maiorana, Fred and Jeanne Schick, Jim, Janece, T.J. Chris, Jon, and Sarah Ohlman, Esther Meyers, Jim and Viola Shirley, Doug, and Diane Van Cleave, Carol Furey-Werhan, Ron Werhan, Harvey and Roma Butchart, Randy and Donna Butler, Barbara Vincent, Steve and Chris Verkamp, Linda Young Wade, Mary Ellen Hamilton, Eldon and Maxine Roth, Edwin and Ruth Druding.**



Randy Butler, Jim Shirley and Harvey Butchart swap tales.

We all lined up in Jeanne's kitchen and helped ourselves to some mighty tasty food that each member contributed to the pot luck meal. Then with plates heaped and running over we each headed to a table (there were three of them) to eat and talk.

After lunch the crowd gathered in the living room to hear **Mike Anderson** talk on the Thunder

River Trail. Mike was the first recipient of the GCPS's scholar-



Pioneers gather in Jeanne and Fred Schick's home in Sedona.

ship in 1992. He stated, that without this, it would not have been possible for him to stay in Fredonia and interview the people who recalled the old days or who were in some way connected with the trail. Mike's work enabled him to place the trail on the National Register of Historic Places.

His talk began with some fascinating maps showing the area and locating of the trail, then with some beautiful slides he took us on a trip over the north rim of the Canyon to Thunder River -- the shortest river in the world (only one-half mile long). It was interesting to learn that in the early days ranchers ranged cattle on the esplanade

near where Thunder River gushes from caves in the canyon wall. Mike stated it was unusual that none of the first pioneers mentioned the river.

Another bit of information many members didn't know was that Thunder River is unusual in that it joins Tapeats Creek. We always figure that creeks join rivers.

When the Grand Canyon first became a National Park few people made the trip down this trail to Thunder River. Now things have changed and the Park limits the number of hikers going there. After seeing Mike's photographs you can understand why it is so popular.

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Happy Birthday Grand Canyon National Park!



This year the Grand Canyon National Park is 75 years old and the Park is preparing a gala celebration. The events will run throughout the year. In some of these the Pioneers Society will possibly want to participate as an extra to the meetings and excursions

already listed in your newsletter.

The activities begin in February with an art exhibit in the visitors center at the Canyon. There will be a special issue of Arizona Highways. In February and March The Museum of Northern Arizona will mount an exhibit entitled; Grand Canyon: The Human Passage. Functions with a specific date will be Grand Canyon School's 75th anniversary open house on February 16, and the actual birthday of the park on February 26 and on which there will be a Community potluck and dance. What a

gala affair that will be, and you will not even have to pay a park entrance fee. For those stamp collecting members the park will have a special postal cancellation to enhance your collection.

From March until September the park newspaper The Guide will have a special insert telling about what is going on. Many more things are in the offing throughout the year and we will keep you posted. Make plans to attend some of these affairs, you will not regret it.

Welcome to Grand Canyon National Park's New Superintendent

Boyd Evison, one of America's most respected park professionals has taken the reigns as Superintendent at Grand Canyon National Park. Evison, no stranger to Grand Canyon, was Superintendent of the Horace M. Albright Training Center here from 1972-1975. During that time he developed an intimacy with the canyon through canyon

hikes and river trips. The park was his class room, and he has visited here many times since.

Superintendent Evison comes at a time of change and will lead the park through the critical stages of the new General Management Plan and continuation of its central role in multilateral cooperative

ventures on the Colorado Plateau.

We of the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society welcome Mr. Evison back to Grand Canyon, and wish him all the success in his work at this crucial time at the National Park.

We Are Looking for a Name

Since the Society has grown and we are now sending over 100 newsletters each month it is time we gave our baby (the

newsletter) a name. So how about putting on your thinking caps and come up with a good one. We will let the membership be the judge

and will award a year's membership to the winner. Come on now- get with it!

Black Cats and Superstitions

*Ellington Field Gulf To Pacific Flight
February 24-26, 1919*

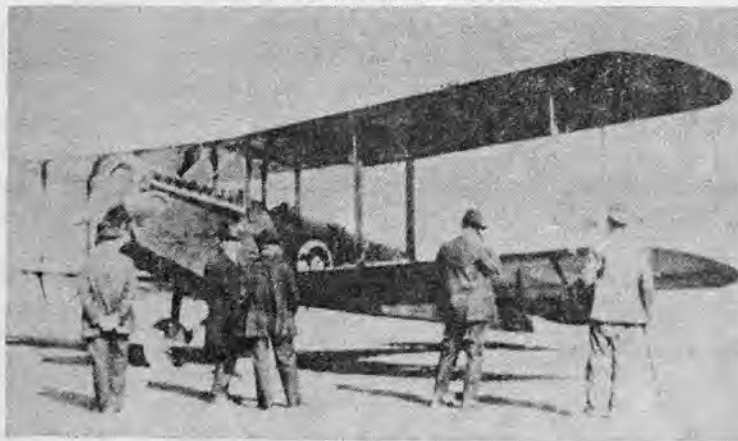
Of all the early superstitions about the Grand Canyon, none was more widespread in 1919 than the Canyon's fearsome air currents. An observer needed only to stand at the edge of the abyss and feel the wind tug at his clothes . . . gentle at first, encouraging a peek over and down into the depths . . . then suddenly a zephyr straining to drag the unsuspecting to their deaths. It took little imagination to "know" an unseen maelstrom existed in the clear air of the Canyon. Merely stand near the rim and feel a cool waft of air creep across the nape of your neck . . . even on the calmest of days. The wary believed. Only the foolhardy would venture into the Canyon skies.

At the end of the "war to end all wars" in 1918, there were plenty of "foolhardy" Army Air Service aviators willing to take the challenge. In December, 1918, a party of three airplanes under the command of Major John C. Bartholf departed March Field near Riverside, California, with the intention of exploring the Grand Canyon... all

part of a survey for a transcontinental airmail route. They made it as far as Peach Springs before the terrain exceeded the capabilities of their planes. Undaunted, Bartholf predicted that soon, other more powerful planes would take up the challenge. The wait was not long.

Less than two months after Bartholf's aborted flight, a squadron of four aircraft hopped from Ellington Field near Houston, Texas, with a mission to

Photo courtesy Mohave County Historical Society



A Black Cat Squadron plane lands at Kingman Feb 24, 1919

survey an airmail route from the Gulf to the Pacific and return. Known as the "Black Cat Squadron" for the bad luck which their enemies would have if they tangled with them, the group was led by First Lieut. Ralph O. Searle, and was consisted of Searle and Lieut. E. D. Jones in plane #1, Lieut. Charles Rugh and photographer Lewis Lewyn in

plane #2, Lieut. H. Burkett and mechanic Sergeant W. E. Cain in plane # 3, and Lieut. Eric Nelson in plane #4.

The bad luck though seemed to be with the squadron. Nelson's plane crashed on landing at Phoenix on the westbound leg and the remaining three planes got lost in the fog trying to find the landing field at Venice, California. Up to this point, the planes had stayed over the low lands. Now, leaving March Field, their route would take them into the high country of the Colorado Plateau of Northern Arizona.

Their luck continued to be bad. Due to arrive in Kingman on Tuesday, the 18th, a winter storm scattered the formation, forcing one plane down at Blythe and another at Needles. Only one of the three made it to Kingman on schedule. To the welcoming shrieks of the Santa Fe's depot whistles and the cheers of the air-minded Kingman reception committee, the plane unceremoniously tipped over on its nose as it rolled to a stop. While no

damage was suffered by any of the planes, except for perhaps a few bruised pilot egos, the toughest challenge, exploring the Grand Canyon, still lay ahead of them.

With a few days of relaxation in Kingman under their belts, Searle and his men knew it was now or never to tackle the Canyon's air currents. Searle would make the first try himself.

Climbing to 14,000 feet in his DeHavilland DH-4, Searle and Nelson, who had rejoined the group, headed along the tracks of the Santa Fe on the afternoon of February 24th. From high over Peach Springs, the Grand Canyon was clearly visible and, with a deep breath, the aviators turned north toward the gorge. Descending to 5,000 feet above the rim, Searle described the view.

The canyon has yet to be visited from the air by someone who can adequately describe the panorama, which could be seen for 200 miles . . . the canyon walls contain all colors in the golden radiance of the setting sun. The river was like a pencil. Every wiggle, every shade, every shadow of the giant gorge was visible at once and there is nothing else comparable to it in Arizona, magnificent as are the region's ordinary mountain ranges. Even as this is true from the rim, it is trebly true from the air.'

Almost as an afterthought, Searle mentioned the flight was smooth and encountered none of the expected air currents. Heartened by the first day's success, plans were made for a flight at rim level and below.

The luck of the draw fell to Lieut. Charles Rugh and the cameraman, Lewis Lewyn, to make the first try for a flight below the rim on the next afternoon. With Lieuts. Burkett and Nelson flying overhead, Rugh cautiously allowed the big DeHavilland to descend to rim level. The air remained smooth. No doubt with a sense of anticipation, Rugh chopped the power and circled down below the rim in the vicinity of Diamond Creek. Almost immediately air bumps were encountered . . . but met without difficulty by the airmen. Lower still the plane descended until, some 2000 feet below the Canyon rim, Rugh leveled off and headed his ship up canyon.

After a few minutes, Lewyn boldly removed his seat belt and stood upright in the rear seat to take photographs, a practice more prudent airmen frowned upon and later prohibited. Caught up in the excitement of the moment, Rugh didn't object.

Only a few miles west of El Tovar, Rugh turned westward and retraced his path to Kingman. At no time

were the uncontrollable canyon currents encountered. The luck of the Black Cat Squadron had turned good.

On the 26th, Lieut. Nelson and mechanic Cain were given the honor of the last Canyon "depth flight" the squadron would perform before heading south to Phoenix and the homeward trek to Houston. Rough air in the Canyon bounced the two around considerably, but without danger.

Superstitions die hard and "Canyon air currents" would prove to be one of the most enduring, notwithstanding the flights of the Ellington Field "Black Cat" Squadron. Two years later, another Army pilot, Lieut. Alexander Pearson, would be assigned the duty of charting the currents of air still believed to exist at Grand Canyon.

As a closing note, the first two flights of the Black Cat Squadron, including Rugh's below the rim adventure, were made before Grand Canyon became a National Park on February 26, 1919. Since Eric Nelson and W.E. Cain were airborne on the 26th, they could be considered the first two men to see the National Park from the air.

Down Bright Angel Canyon

By James Knipmeyer

James Knipmeyer wrote November 21, 1993-

The enclosed photograph is of myself and a historical inscription that I found while on a trip with the National Park Service and the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies group through Cataract Canyon of the Colorado River this past October. Though it is located in southeastern Utah, the inscription does tie in with a rather little-known trip to the Grand Canyon in 1891. Therefore, I thought that perhaps the photo of the inscription and an edited version of a Salt Lake City Newspaper article concerning the expedition might be of interest.

The inscription reads: "Col. Gran. Canyon, M. & Imp Co. July 22, 1891. No 1 (boat) Wrecked." It was left by members of the party led by James Best of the Colorado Grand Canyon Mining and Improvement Company of Denver Colorado. It was a prospecting trip down the Colorado River with the ultimate goal of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. While the newspaper does not mention either fact, the expedition pinned one of their boats at this point near the head of Mile-long Rapid and "their desire not to be questioned about the meaning of their explorations" in Grand Canyon, was a supposed silver mine in Bright Angel Canyon!

I hope this will be of interest to other members of the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society.

Marvelous New Discovery in Realms of Grandeur and Beauty

For a day or two past, resting from a long, interesting, but in some respects wearisome expedition to a distant portion of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, two gentlemen of Denver have been visiting Salt Lake. Their

names are John Hislop, engineer, and J. A. McCormick, photographer. These gentlemen, associated with six other persons, started in two substantial boats, on 15th of July last, from a point on Green River nearest the Denver and Rio Grande railroad, their objective point being the Buckskin Mountains, between four and five hundred miles distant. They were provisioned for a journey of three months' duration, and their outfit embraced almost every article desirable for a sojourn in wild and uninhabited regions.

The Bright Angel

An Interesting Stream-Wonderful Natural Bridge

The Bright Angel Canyon is the channel of a small stream, twenty miles long only, rising in the Buckskin Mountains, its source being a spring rising from the bottom of the chasm, ten feet wide, with a depth of twelve to fourteen inches. Other springs almost as large as the first contribute their waters further down, falling 200 or 300 feet over the side of the mountain in a series of cascades, making a scene of remarkable beauty. The Bright Angel stream, in its course of twenty miles, has a fall of 4000 feet, so its dashing impetuosity can readily be fancied. It is quite inaccessible, and portions of it were visited for the first time of any white man by the Hislop-McCormick party. Four of them started from the headwaters, carrying blankets and provisions. Clambering down the precipitous declivity for three miles, they reached a point a thousand feet below their camp, where they came to a perpendicular jump-off 600 feet in height. In order to get around this they followed a bench on the top of a marble ledge till

they came to an immense rock slide or talus, which they followed cautiously down to the bottom of the canyon, about a mile below the first of the springs of which the stream is formed. By this time their clothes were in tatters, but thenceforth traveling was comparatively easy.

The Natural Bridge

On the left of the Bright Angel Canyon our adventurers discovered a small one in which there is a beautiful natural bridge of solid sandstone rock, 300 feet above the bottom, stretching fifty feet across the abyss, and about forty feet wide. Further down on the west they also discovered a side canyon, which they named Bright Angel Grotto.

A Fairy-Like Grotto--- Bowers of Transcendent Beauty and Wild Enchantment

The Bright Angel Grotto, as described, is a most enchanting and lovely spot. It is a side canyon which is apparently 300 feet wide, stretching back some 800 feet. The walls of this great cavernous gulch are of granite and close in a sort of dome-like alcove with a tessellated ceiling latticed with ferns. The explorer's attention is attracted to a green flat formed by erosions which, being kept wet or damp, produced a growth of small cottonwood and cane some fifteen feet in height-- a veritable jungle, obscuring a miniature lake. Such retreats seem to be formed by nature for deer and mountain sheep, where they go to drink. The sight of them is made striking to the human eye by the entrancing contrast with the nude and barren mountains.

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Natures Decorations

From the far end of the chasm above the grotto narrow streams and threads of tepid water issue, with a sheer fall of from fifty to sixty feet, whilst from the moss-grown wall little drops exude and trickle sparklingly down the side. Trailing vines swing with the wind in graceful festoons, and delicate ferns embroider the shining rocks with a beautiful tapestry.

Fountain of Liquid Diamonds

The constant flowing and percolation of springs on the side of the wall of the grotto have formed a basin beneath, in the extreme end of which stands what may be called an immense stalagmite, three feet in diameter at the top, and spreading out at the bottom to a width of twenty feet. The cascade from the shelf above, where the little streams unite, falls upon the rock, and is dashed into myriads of gleaming streams that dance and bubble upon the surface of the tiny lake below, the overflow of which courses down the canyon and slakes the bit of vegetation at the entrance.

A Scene From the Arabian Nights

A more enchanting scene never perhaps broke upon human vision.



James Knipmeyer at rock inscription in Cataract Canyon, Utah

Not only is the cliff side dressed in the variegated colors of wild flowers, moss and fern, but within the charmed grotto the bell-shaped honeysuckle and moun-

tain pink flood the untainted air with their faint but delicious perfume, where the tireless wings of the humming bird flutter all day long. Such a scene is like the realization of a fairy tale-- a dream of loveliness full of flowers and fragrance, where the shifting scenes of sunshine and storm have no entrance, and where the trceries of the most vivid fancy are reproduced in ten-fold glory, radiant and glowing....

On November 30, 1993, I replied to Jim's letter as follows:

... Thanks for the wonderful picture of the rock inscription and the article about the trip down Bright Angel Canyon. Most interesting and I am sure members of the GCPS will enjoy reading it. Writing in those days was really quite poetic.

Emery and Ellsworth Kolb passed and photographed this same inscription on their trip

through the canyons in 1911. It is odd neither mentioned it in their journals. They did mention the name of A.G. Turner painted on the rocks with the words Socialism 1912 painted below. Emery entered this in his journal under the date of Monday (October) 30th. 11. It may not be there now. The Kolbs also painted their names at the confluence of the Green and

Grand but I doubt if that is there now as it was somewhat faded in the 1960s.

It is also interesting to note that G.M. Wright also inscribed his name near Jacobs Pools in 1893 (GCPS Newsletter II-3/3, September 1991). This you probably have seen.

On December 5th Jim answered as follows:

. . . The other three inscriptions that you mentioned are all familiar to me. The Kolb and the Turner names are both still there. "The Kolb Bros." right at the Confluence is, as you said, very faded, but if you look closely it can still be made out. The "A.G. Turner" is also still down in Cataract, but again very faded. The word "Socialism" and 1912 painted below are no longer visible. In fact, your mention of them was the first time that I ever heard or read about them! Most historians believe that Turner left his name there in either 1904 or 1907, the two times he is known to have traversed Cataract.

There are some questions about the Wright inscription above Jacobs Pools. You give the date, quoting Harvey Butchart, as 1893. A friend of mine who has seen it gives a date of 1892. But a photograph that P.T. Reilly sent me clearly gives a date of 1894! I wonder if there is more than one Wright inscription in the area or were Harvey and my friend just "remembering" incorrectly????!!

Mr. Butchart also implies in his 1991 letter that Wright inscription by the remains of the Spencer steamboat at Lee's Ferry has been removed by the park service. I was at Lee's Ferry

in 1987 and it was still there then. Pretty faint, though. I really don't think that the NPS would have removed it, but I don't know for sure, obviously.

In his 1991 letter Harvey also mentions the route leading from the canyon rim down to the river at mile-10 above Lee's Ferry. It is interesting to note that G.M. Wright also left an inscription there. . . .

Regardless it appears that this mister G.M. Wright managed to get around. Oddly we did not find his name at House Rock Springs-or did we just plain miss it?

B i t s a n d P i e c e s

The scholarship fund continues to grow and we express our thanks to **Jim and Janece Ohlman** for their contribution.

Welcome New Members

It is always a pleasure to welcome new members to our group. This month **Sue Finley**, Manager of Moqui Lodge at Tusayan, **Barbara Vincent** of Sedona, Az., **Patrick and Rita Burns** and family and **Randy Butler** of Flagstaff. We hope you will be able to join us in our meetings and outings.

Dues

Have you paid your 1994 dues? If you haven't why not do it now so you won't miss out on any of the things

coming up: the great Grand Canyon birthday celebration, all the Pioneers outings and of course the monthly newsletters. In case you have forgotten the dues for a family membership is \$15, and a single membership is \$10.

The Verde Train Trip

It was a wonderful surprise to see the fast action everyone took in getting reservations to **Al Richmond** for the Verde Valley Train trip. At the last count we had 40 signed up. Al reports that we hope to have a local historian on board to tell about what went on in the area. With that many Pioneers we should have a great time.

A Reminder

Our March program will be a tour inside the new

Cline Library building that now houses the special collection archives. **Karen Underhill**, director of the Special Collections Division, will arrange a guided tour. Those new members unfamiliar with the GCPS's activities will be interested in knowing that the Society has a collection archived there consisting of some of **Art Metzger** and **Ralph Cameron's** papers, and several photographic collections.

We will meet at the library (next door to Ardrey Auditorium) on the NAU campus at 10:30 AM. After touring the library we will proceed to Furr's Cafeteria for lunch and general socializing. See you there.

Grand Canyon Pioneers Meetings

As best we are able to foresee, our meetings and excursions for 1994 will be as follows:

February 19 - Verde Valley Train trip from Clarksdale to Perkinsville. **Al Richmond** in charge.

March 19 - Inside the Special Collections Cline Library, NAU in the morning. Lunch at Furr's Cafeteria.

April 23 - Tour Kolb Studio at Grand Canyon to view showing of 100 prizewinning paintings of National Parks.

May 14 - Picnic lunch tour of Moenave conducted by **David Barrow**.

June 11 - Picnic lunch and cookout at Shoshone Point, Grand Canyon.

July 16 - Overnight campout at Young, AZ. for annual Pleasant Valley Days to include tour of

museums, houses, rodeo, and dance.

August 13 - Picnic lunch at Rowe Well. Visit to site of Grandview and Hance Hotels. Dedication of plaques on chairs and clock made by **Ed Cummings**, located at Watchtower.

September 10 - Winslow with lunch at Falcon Restaurant. Visit to Old Trails Museum and La Posado conducted by **Janice Griffith**.

October 15 - Annual meeting. Time and place not yet determined.

November - Pending.

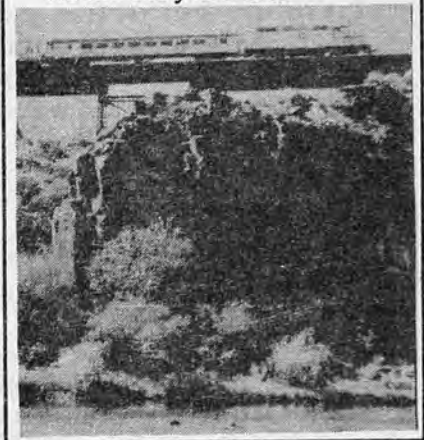
December - No meeting due to holidays.

Mark your calendar so you will not miss any of these trips.

The Verde Valley Train Ride

Don't forget those of you who have signed up for the train ride on February 19, 1994, that we are to meet at the station in Clarksdale at 10:15 AM. We board the train at 10:35 and depart at 11:00 AM.

We will see you there.



The Verde Valley Train.

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GCPS Newsletter:

Editor: Bill Suran
Designer: Marie Maiorana
Printer: Al Richmond

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