

# G . C . P . S .

Grand Canyon Pioneers Society

## N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 1, Number 3

Information for Members and Friends of G.C.P.S.

NOVEMBER 1990

This is the third of a three part article written by Grand Canyon Pioneer Gale Burak. It first appeared in the summer of 1982 in "The Guide", published by the Grand Canyon Natural History Association, and is reprinted here with their permission.

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When I went to Havasupai in the Spring of 1943 for vacation, I had no idea I would wind up with a job as cook for the Havasu Lead and Zinc Mine. But when the camp cook became ill and had to leave the canyon, that is the way it turned out.

During the three months I spent in Havasupai I had come to know many of the village people and liked and was accepted by them. As the time for me to leave grew near, I wanted to have more time to be among them and let their quiet ways be a part of my own life for a brief space.

I walked up the trail from the mine to the village and stayed at the Agency with Beulah and Lonnie Hardin. Effie Hanna, our camp washerwoman, had asked me to partake in a sweat bath on "ladies' day" while I was there. I had watched the men build the fires to heat rocks for it and seen how they wrapped stiff green hides over a framework of curved willow branches. I'd waited, amazed, at the length of time men sat crouched inside and had been startled when they burst from the opening whooping and yelling and jumped into the cold creek nearby. I had no idea of the actual experience. I accepted.

We filed on hands and knees into the low lodge after the hot rocks had been placed in a center cavity. The women were shy, friendly but nervous, as we squatted in a fetal position around the perimeter. Someone sealed the doorway skin and immediately a prickly heat of panic engulfed me, as

did the odors of ripe cowhides, perspiring large women and steam. Within minutes I was sure I'd faint and fall face-first on the hot rocks, so I frantically scrambled outside and dashed for the creek, followed by titters of laughter from the ladies inside. I stayed in the creek until they joined me a little later!

Playing in the water was more my thing, anyway, so I swam with the children whenever I could. Such splashing and excitement: kids of all ages, sleek and brown and as supple as otters, all jumping in together with their dogs and ponies, cavorting on and underwater. It wasn't hard to drop all inhibitions and join them, screeching and splashing as vigorously as any!

Effie's husband Mark was a neat, quiet, beaming man who was the acknowledged best deerhide tanner in the tribe. At Effie's suggestion I asked him to cure a hide for me and make a pull-over laced shirt from it. No fringes, please Mark, but a deep rich mahogany color would be fine. "It takes six weeks for the work. You just can't hurry the process, you know. When it is

### Ft. Valley -- November Program

On November 3rd, the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society met in the conference room of the U.S.G.S. in Flagstaff. Bob Coody, of the NAU Special Collections Library, and GCPS member, presented a history of the Ft. Valley area involving his endeavors to locate Ft. Moroni. Bob kept everyone spellbound with his description of several attempts to settle the area, including the town site of Agassiz, several other "flag staffs" being erected, and the headquarters ranch for the A-1 Cattle Company. Thank you, Bob, we really enjoyed your presentation.

Members and guests present were: Al Richmond, Fred Schick, Jeanne Schick, Carol Furey-Werhan, Sibyl Suran, Bill Suran, Randy Butler, Marie Maiorana, Charlie Hoffman, Jay Cooper, Bob Coody, Trevor Stanley, and Ron Werhan.

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*Burak, continued...*

all scraped and soft, I'll finish it up fast." But the skin was still soaking in wood ashes, buried in the camp sand beside the creek bank when I left the village and I never got to wear it.

Jim Crook was the Episcopal minister. He had attended Indian College in Phoenix and took his calling very seriously. General George Crook, of the Apache Wars fame, had ridden horseback down the Klalapa Trail in 1884 to visit Chief Navajo, a former scout of his. Jim's father was so impressed by the General that he took his name. Jim was tall, deep voiced and gentle. He delivered a fine sermon. Services were held in the little white school. Built in 1912, as were most of the government buildings there, the school has a bell cupola on top. Twice each Sunday morning Jim gave sermons; one in English, with the collection plate conspicuously passed midway, then one for the Indian children or any repenting adults. During the English version (a simple biblical theme with a moral), they had sat quietly at the back of the room, seriously reading funny books. Once Jim got going in Supai, however, gales of laughter and giggles swept the room. Finally, after a ponderous pronouncement by Jim (with more laughter from the audience), he would say in English, "We will now sing 'Jesus Loves Me' if the piano will please play..." which was my cue to do a four-fingered accompaniment.

Before I had gone down to cook at the mining camp in mid-May, the school bell had called the children each morning, echoing off the brilliant red cliffs far into the recesses of the serpentine valley. If it promised to be an extra hot day, several little boys might decide that it was more educational to go look for pollywogs. On the other hand, if it was cooler and cloudy, father

## President's Message:

Reelection of our officers has been taken as a mandate to get something done this coming year. During the last meeting we discussed the importance of publishing the newsletter on a regular schedule. The newsletter is our only contact with many of our members, and we would appreciate any contributions of news, stories, articles, or even gossip if it's fit for publication. I have really enjoyed reading the letters and stories we've received during the past. Thank you for the many contributions.

My main goals for the coming year are: A regular meeting and newsletter schedule, several outings and socials in and around the Canyon, the publication of Canyon and related articles, increase the GCPS collection, and an increase in active membership. I hope you will all participate in achieving these goals.

Planned schedule for publication: November, January, March, May, July and September. We will send out announcements as needed.

Our Vice-President, **Jeanne Schick**, recently sent a request to many of her friends for stories about life at the Canyon, and we are eagerly anticipating the fruits of her efforts. If you have any stories you like, please send them in. Is there anyone from your past at the Canyon you would like to locate? Perhaps we can give you a hand.

Our Secretary, **Al Richmond**, has mentioned our participation in preparing the Metzger-Schick collection for GCPS section of the NAU Special Collections Library. Placing items in the special collection is an excellent way of preserving them from deterioration and making them available to researchers and historians. If you can answer the questions, "when, where, who and how?" to any collectible, it would add greatly to its value.

*Ron Werhan*

often needed help with Spring plowing and cultivating so the corn, tomatoes, squash and melons could be planted. The school teacher had an up-hill job competing with Mother Nature for the children's time.

Family ties were strong in Supai. I seldom heard a cross word and never saw a child physically punished. Patience and laughter, with joint participation in activities by all ages gave dignity to the child and peace to all concerned. If mother was weaving a lovely willow basket of willow and devilsclaw, her daughter had her own small tray close by to struggle with. If dad was hoeing weeds, junior wasn't far behind in the next row, bare toes digging hard into the soft warm earth, trying to keep up. Runny noses and tousled hair, dirty little faces and hand-me-down clothes all counted for naught. They were happy tots, born to clear water and horses; to brilliant blue sky, shape-

ly red cliffs, and their lush, green valley. Long before a child could walk upright he sat solemnly within the protective curve of his father's arm in the saddle, little fat legs straight out sideways, bouncing along with the aplomb of a centaur.

By the age of ten, he could ride bareback with the best and competed in the "Peewee" class of the bimonthly village rodeo. The rodeo ground, with a chute for broncs and pens for bull-dogging stock, was a wide, packed-earth, dusty field at the upper end of the village. There was a quarter-mile straight stretch running parallel to the main trail that was used for races. Cottonwood trees shaded two sides of the grounds and this was where the women and children enjoyed the action. They would spread out old blankets adjoining each other and sit down . . . not to gossip or even to eat. No, they sat, legs out before them, gambling by the hour. They

*November 1990*

## Dripping Springs Outing -- October 13, 1990

Our camp out -- hike to Dripping Springs will not be recorded with the epic treks of the Grand Canyon, but for those who attended, it was a great weekend. For starters, our reservations at the 10-X Camp Ground were to no avail because, unknown to us, the Forest Service closed the camp ground on October 1st. Carol and I spent the weekend camped out along the road to Anita. Saturday morning we were joined by Bill and Sibyl Suran and their friend Nancy Reimsche. Nancy, a newcomer to hiking and the canyon environs in general, had to endure the entire history of the area (we treat all newcomers this way). She also provided the excuse for our small group to make stops at other points of interest along the way. We enjoyed her company and hope she joins us on other trips.

We had chosen the Waldron Trail for our hike this time. Two weeks earlier Carol and I had hiked to the springs by way of the Boucher Trail and decided it might be a bit rough for our regular hike. Anyone know who Waldron was? We know it had no relation to Waldren Pond, but as we walked along the trail, Bill Suran asked "Oh, you've heard of 'Waldren Pond', haven't you?" From then on we spent time trying to "out-pun" each other.

Our lunch stop was atop a rocky out-crop with a magnificent view of the canyon. Sibyl tried to fatten us all up with her delicious cookies and Bill treated us to a few stories. We had such a good time relaxing, enjoying the view of the canyon from our perch, and simply talking with good friends that we never did finish the hike. The Canyon does that to you. So the Dripping Springs hike is on the agenda again, for another time.

*Ron Werhan*

played an old Chinese card game of Fan-Tan or their own creation of Coon-can while their babies played or slept around their ample skirts.

These people once ranged far and wide across the plateaus with their Hualapai cousins, from the San Francisco peaks to Grand Wash Cliffs. They lived in their fertile canyon mainly in the warm growing months when corn, beans and squash could be raised and dried for the rest of the year. They were hunters, roaming the forested uplands south from the Grand Canyon to find the elk, deer and antelope on which their shelters, clothing, tools and food depended. They were farming in Supai when Padre Graces came to visit and convert in June, 1776.

His white face and odd clothing amused them and they feasted him royally. But he wasn't able to convince or convert them, so he left. They were still tilling their fields down there in 1881 when Lt. Col Price rode his cavalry unit down the Klalapa Trail to determine their government reservation boundaries. Since that was where they were, that was what . . . and all . . . they got: just the valley. In 1975 the Great Thumb Mesa and other lands were returned for traditional use.

Many of the old foot-trails into the fifty-mile long canyon were converted to horse-trails once the Spanish introduced stock to the area. Others, such as the old Apache

Trail could still be scaled only with the use of a notched pole or climbing rope, just as they had been for centuries.

A few days before I left Supai, I turned up the hill by the remains of an old rock defense wall and climbed the side of the canyon to a traverse trail above the Supai sandstone cliffs; I looked down on the white speck which was the schoolhouse, and on beyond to the Agency buildings, almost submerged in spreading cottonwoods, farms, peach orchards and fig trees dotted the rectangular fields and willow-edged creek wound lazily through the length of the valley. Spirals of dust pin-pointed horseback riders or dust-devils. Across the valley on their butte-base, the Wigleeva spires looked benignly down on their peaceful domain. Directly below me, a chattering group of men, stripped to their loin cloths, were preparing for their sweat bath. A dog barked and a dozen more took up the chorus, while off in a distant unseen pool children whooped with joy. How hard it was going to be to leave this serenity for the city pace!

On my last morning, Jim Crook showed up with a wide smile on his kindly face. He led his prize black stallion which I could ride in style up to Topocoba Hilltop. Lorenzo looked the other way as he packed up the mail sacks and I said tearful last words with my friends and hosts, the Hardings. Along the lane through the upper village several children stood with their mamas, dogs, horses and chickens. "Goodbye . . . goodbye . . . Come back to see us . . . soon."

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## Next Meeting:

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 12, 1991. We haven't set a meeting location or program yet, so if you have some ideas, let us know. Might be a good time to work off some of the Holiday feasting with a hike. Watch for an announcement in late December.

## From the Secretary's Desk:

### 1990 Board of Directors Election Results:

We had an excellent return of ballots (62%) and the tabulations were announced formally at the 3 November meeting. All five incumbents retained their positions, although Bill Suran gave them a run for the money. For the three year position from 1 October 1990 to 30 September 1993, the following were elected as members of the Board of Directors:

Buford Belgard  
 Harry Cole  
 Carol Furey-Werhan  
 Al Richmond  
 Jeanne Schick

At the 3 November Meeting the election of offices was held per the by-laws and again the incumbents carried the day. For the one year term from 1 October 1990 to 30 September 1991, the following were elected to the office indicated:

Ron Werhan, President  
 Jeanne Schick, Vice-President  
 Fred Schick, Treasurer  
 Al Richmond, Secretary.

Thank you all for your support and participation in your society. This works only because of everyone's efforts. There are politicians who would appreciate this kind of support on election day!

And speaking of support - it is that time of the year again. Annual membership dues are coming due in January. Everyone now has the same due date, which is not later than 31 January. Individual memberships are still \$10.00 and the family rate is \$15.00. We are always open for new memberships. Please pass the word on to your friends and family.

A committee with Charles Hoffman as chair is presently exploring the possibilities of a joint publication project with the Grand Canyon Natural History Association. With us acting as source and doing the initial editing and the GCNHA's publishing resources, we may be able to make more information available to the public about many different facets of the Grand Canyon region. Pam Frazier of the GCNHA met with us and gave us every reason to feel we could be successful with the project. This might provide a source for publication of everything from member's recollection of Canyon life to local historian's projects to graduate student theses. If we do this properly, both the GCPS and GCNHA could have something to really be proud of and provide the public with information they would not otherwise have. Stay tuned.

*Al Richmond*

*From the Treasurer's Desk*

As of this report the Society's accounts are as follows:

Checking Account.....	\$1,449.30
Savings (CD) .....	2,000.00 + interest to be calculated on rollover.
Accounts Receivable.....	597.00 (Fred Harvey Co.)
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$4,046.30 + interest</b>

We will have a full accounting of expenditures and income at the January meeting and in the newsletter. In the way of a reminder, the interest generated by the CD will be utilized as support for worthwhile Society projects or as a small grant for an NAU graduate student working on Grand Canyon region related projects. These projects can be historical or scientific in nature. The primary criteria is that they further knowledge about the region and/or preserve existing artifacts, documents and photographs. The Grants will be offered and considered by the Fall of each year beginning in 1991.

*Fred Schick*

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 P.O. Box 14, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023.  
 Contact: Ron Werhan at 928-739-1111 or Fred Werhan

Compiled by Marie Maiorana, using Ventura Publisher. All inquiries, comments, submissions may be sent to the above address. Annual membership fee is \$10 individual, \$15 family.