The Ol' Pioneer

The Triannual Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

Volume 20 : Number 1 www.GrandCanyonHistory.org Spring 2009

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President's Letter

As a young child growing up in Flagstaff, the Grand Canyon was the place that I got dragged to each time visitors or relatives came from out of town. Although I enjoyed hiking and being outside even then, I took the canyon itself for granted. It had been there from my earliest memories and I just assumed that everybody around the country had one—or something similar—nearby. It would require a move to Phoenix and over a decade spent living in a large metropolitan area far away from parks, pine trees and trails to fully appreciate what I had in the canyon.

My own rediscovery of the Grand Canyon began several years ago with a short backpacking trip to Phantom Ranch. It refreshed my memories of childhood trips and reintroduced me to the natural, geologic and historic complexities of the area that had often been lost on me as a child. Since then, I have tried to make it to the bottom at least once per year as well as explore new trails. Likewise, attending the Grand Canyon History Symposium re-ignited my interest in the canyon's history and the numerous important historical sites that are so often overlooked amongst the surrounding scenic grandeur.

It was a little more than a year ago, that I first joined the Grand Canyon Historical Society as a basic member. Since then, I have got to know the various members of the board, past and present, and gained an appreciation of their passion for the canyon and their extensive knowledge of it. The annual picnic was a great place to meet people, hear stories and catch up on park news. Several excellent presentations and trips to the historic Red Butte airfield and Powell Museum gave me new insights into the canyon's history and the people that have helped shape it. Each visit to the canyon left me wanting to return; each presentation or lively discussion left me wanting to learn more.

As we start a new year with all of its challenges and opportunities, I encourage each of you to consider your own rediscovery or continued exploration of the Grand Canyon and its history. We have a number of great outings planned (and more in the works) as well as the annual picnic and board meeting and I strongly encourage all members to attend as many as possible. If you have ideas for outings, presentations or projects, please let myself or another board member know. If you have some canyon topic that you have been researching – large or small – consider writing a short article for the journal or newsletter. We welcome and encourage everyone's participation. So flip through your old canyon photos, browse a book on canyon history, study the maps and the trail guides… remember what it is like to be at the canyon. Then pull on your hiking boots, grab your camera or notebook and join us!

Erik Berg, GCHS President

I don't know how I got myself so confused, but in doing so I mis-numbered the previous issue of the Ol' Poneer as Volume 20: Number 2, when it was actually Volume 19: Number 2. So, to those of you who were paying attention, this issue is 20:1, and we now will be doing three issues a year (see below) so the next one will be 20:2 (again) and then 20:3. Sorry about that. —Mary Williams, editor
P.S. Send stuff!

Cover: Henry Miller photo illustration

The Ol' Pioneer submission deadlines are February 1, 2009 for Volume 20:1. June 1, 2009 for Volume 20:2 and October 1, 2009 for Volume 20:3.

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The Historical Society was established in July 1984 as a non-profit corporation to develop and promote appreciation, under-standing and education of the earlier history of the inhabitants and important events of the Grand Canyon.

The Ol' Pioneer is published bi-annually by the GRAND CANYON HISTORICAL SOCIETY in conjunction with *The Bulletin*, an informational paper. Both publications are a benefit of membership. Membership in the Society is open to any person interested in the historical, educational, and charitable purposes of the Society. Membership is on an annual basis using the standard calendar; and dues of $20 are payable on the 1st of January each year, and mailed to the GCHS Treasurer, PO Box 345 Flagstaff, AZ 86002.

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Letters...

Dear Mary,

The recent article in *The Bulletin* for October was of great interest to me, especially the article on the Red Butte Airfield. In 1941 I had just graduated from high school and returned from Wasatch Academy in Utah, to my home at Grand Canyon, and was looking for a job. I was told they were looking for someone to work at the air field, in the office, and since I had just finished taking a business course, I was hired. I was only there a short while as I got a better and more permanent position at Babbitt's at the Grand Canyon—and since I did not have a car and finding a ride to the airport was difficult, I opted to work in town. I don't remember a lot about the air field as I spent my time in the office.

My two sisters were born at the Grand Canyon and I was born in Williams as was my mother, Grace Lockridge Moore. My sis and I grew up at the Canyon and spent many happy hours there. I would not trade those years for anything, as they were the best.

Since Grand Canyon was a village of about 250 people in the winter time—and of course grew to about 500 in the summer with all the summer help and tourists—our winters were quiet.

My family goes way back as my mother was raised between the Grand Canyon and Williams, plus Anita, she went to school in the first school building at the Canyon, which was located near where the Maswick Lodge is now. Her father, William H. "Pap" Lockridge surveyed the area which the railroad track from Williams to Grand Canyon was located. He also worked for Mr. Cameron, who owned the Cameron Hotel.

My mother had many stories to tell us about her early years there, including tales of Capt. John Hance, she went to school with the Bass girls, and knew all of the William Bass family. My only regret is that I did not write down these stories and so over the years the memories have faded.

Our father, Sherman B. Moore, came to Anita Ranger Station in 1919 and that was where he met our mom. They were married in 1921 and at that time were at the Grand Canyon. Dad first worked as a trail guide for Fred Harvey, later became a chauffeur and garage man. From there he went to work in the Post Office where Art Metzger was postmaster. The old Post Office was in the downstairs floor of the Cameron Hotel, and we lived in the upstairs. WE remained there, until they built the new Post Office in 1935 and were moved to two houses on what was then Avenue A. Later on after many years in the Post Office he started with he Park Service as a ranger.

Our lives there at the Canyon were interesting to say the least. As young children we had to make our own entertainment as we did not have televisions, electronic equipment, or such to entertain us. Instead we played softball, games like Kick the Can, Annie Annie Over, Run Sheep Run, and of course Hide and Seek. As young teens we spent time at the picture shows and dancing at the Bright Angel Lodge where dances were had for the tourists as well as locals. This we enjoyed immensely and when WWII came along, my sis and I plus our girlfriend Jeanne Cummings (whose dad was a Fred Harvey guide) all joined the U.S. Navy Waves where we stayed until 1945 when we all three married and went our separate ways.

During our high school years, due to lack of a high school at Grand Canyon (for most of us) we went to Wasatch Academy, a boarding school in Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

This is just a small segment of our lives at Grand Canyon.

—Ethel Moore Cole

Grand Canyon Association Lecture Series Calendar

Wednesday March 11, 2009
Flagstaff
Revealing the Secrets of Grand Canyon's Historic River Boats
Jan Balsom and Brynn Bender

Sunday March 15, 2009
Prescott
John Wesley Powell: The Man, the Myth, the Mystery
Richard Quartaroli

Thursday March 19, 2009
Glendale
Ancient Discoveries in Petrified Forest
Jeff Kida

Wednesday April 1, 2009
Flagstaff
Climate Lessons from Grand Canyon: Can 1.8 Billion Years of History Help Us Predict the Next Century?
Carl Bowman

Thursday April 16, 2009
Glendale
Revealing the Secrets of Grand Canyon's Historic River Boats
Jan Balsom and Brynn Bender

Continued on page 11

Tropic of Canyon

by Don Lago

Grand Canyon river guides often witness the power of the Grand Canyon to change lives. When people are cut off from their usual social realities and immersed in the power of nature, they sometimes perceive themselves in new ways and decide that they cannot return to their old lives. Such moments of truth also happen on Grand Canyon hikes and even on visits to the rim, but these experiences tend to be more private, less likely to be witnessed and remembered by others. Yet there was one such transformative experience that was remembered in books, for it happened to a prominent American writer.

For a generation of American writers, leaving America became a rite of passage. Leaving America was a different experience for writers than it was for American artists. For artists it was a practical career necessity. The best artists and art schools and the latest trends were in Europe. But for writers it was a deeply problematic act. Being an American writer was supposed to mean that you wrote about the American experience. By going to Europe, writers cut themselves off from both their personal and national experience. If American writers imagined that they could write about Europe, they quickly realized that they lacked the authenticity to do so. At best, they might write about being an American in Paris. For artists, painting a face, a flower, or a mountain in Europe was not fundamentally different from painting the same subjects in America. But for writers there usually came a moment of truth in which they realized that to be writers at all they needed to go home and write about the American experience. This was a difficult realization, since most writers had gone to Europe as an act of rejecting American society. America was a land of philistines who didn't value literature, while Europe was the land of intellectual sophistication. In New York City cafes businessmen talked about the stock market and advertising gimmicks, while in Paris cafes bohemians talked about the latest ideas, books, and art movements.

The magnetism of Paris cafes was especially powerful in the 1920s. In America everyone was enthralled by the stock market, mass consumerism, corporation culture, and small-town boosterism. The Progressive movement had fizzled out into a conservative political era; American moral values remained Victorian; and with the Scopes trail it had become a criminal act to talk about ideas. Most annoying of all, America's triumph in the Great War had left it with a smug sense of its superiority. Disgusted, many young Americans fled to Europe and became the Lost Generation. When Lost Generation writers realized that to find their voice they needed to go back to the society they had rejected, they faced many dilemmas, and they came up with different solutions. Ernest Hemingway, like Gershwin in music, wrote about being an American in Paris. William Faulkner, like Thomas Hart Benton in art, returned to the region of his birth and found a regional expression of universal human longings. Many writers, like Sinclair Lewis, decided that it was their mission to be adversaries of American society.

For Henry Miller, returning to America and reconnecting with it was especially problematic. Miller's novel *Tropic of Cancer,* published in Paris in 1934, had been banned from being published in America. Miller had taken this as the banning of himself. Miller had no intention of returning to America. Still, his feelings about America continued gnawing at him. There were some things about it that he missed powerfully. This wasn't his family, with whom he had fallen out long ago. It was the land itself, especially the landscapes of the American West. At age twenty-one, in 1913, he had taken a trip across the Southwest and been fascinated by it. The more time he spent in Paris, with its narrow lanes, crowds, noise, and artificial fashions in clothing and food, the more he remembered the open horizons of the American West; the more he remembered its people, the Indians who lived with a simplicity and authenticity that was so different from Parisians. It was ironic that Parisians frequently asked him about the American West: Did you ever meet any Indians? Are desert sunsets beautiful? Have you been to the Grand Canyon? To the latter question he was chagrined to have to answer No; he had been through Arizona, but he hadn't been to the Grand Canyon. And now he had left this land behind, left it only to discover that the sophisticated Parisians found it all quite fascinating.

In his imagination Henry Miller started planning a journey across America. This was strictly a fantasy trip, since Miller was a starving artist. In his journal he occasionally wrote down places to explore. "I remember distinctly" he wrote later, "the thrill I had when putting down such words as Mobile, Suwanee River, Navajos, Painted Desert…"[1]

In 1940, after a decade as an expatriate, Miller finally returned to America, but in his mind he was not returning, he was coming to settle accounts and to say goodbye for good. "I felt the need to effect a reconciliation with my native land," he said introducing the book he wrote about his journey. "It was an urgent need because, unlike most prodigal sons, I was returning not with the intention of remaining in the bosom of the family but of wandering forth again, perhaps never to return. I wanted to have a last look at my country and leave it with a good taste in my mouth. I didn't want to run away from it, as I had originally. I wanted to embrace it, to feel that the old wounds were really healed, and

set out for the unknown with a blessing on my lips."[2]

Henry Miller would end up staying in America, living and writing in a rustic house perched atop a wilderness cliff, in another universe from Paris. One thing that helped change his mind was the Grand Canyon: "For over thirty years I had been aching to see this huge hole in the earth."[3]

Henry Miller's fame as a novelist came from his sensuality. He did get some respect for his stylistic innovations, especially for picking up elements of surrealism and Dadaism and working them into fiction. But it was the candid sexuality of his characters that made Miller unique—and notorious. Miller became the focus of the most famous censorship battle in American history, which ended in 1964 when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the 30-year ban on his books was even naughtier than the four-letter words in his books. Henry Miller became a cause célèbre among American writers, artists, civil libertarians, and everyone who had ever been frustrated by American philistinism. Famous writers rallied to Miller's defense and wrote elaborate justifications as to why his books weren't smut but art, the greatest art. Miller, they proclaimed, was the American James Joyce, using stream-of-consciousness to tell the deepest secrets of human life. Miller was the American Proust. He was the greatest literary innovator since Shakespeare. All that sex was actually spiritual, the Dionysian force in all nature, a celebration of life. Then, after the Supreme Court ruling, literary folks wondered if they might have gotten a bit carried away. It might be nice if Miller's novels had a bit more structure, even a plot. He did seem to ramble. Perhaps exploring the self wasn't the same thing as narcissistic self-indulgence. Miller's preoccupation with sex did seem pretty adolescent sometimes. When feminist literary criticism got going and got going on Miller, it turned out that he had been a male chauvinist pig and a dirty old man after all.

Yet Miller did have a Dionysian inclination, a philosophy that nature was a powerful transcendent spirit that manifested itself through humans. Miller was born in Manhattan at the moment that Walt Whitman was dying there, and it was Whitman that most inspired Miller's philosophy, free-flowing style, exuberance, and embrace of sensuality. In his youth Miller read the American transcendentalists—Emerson and Thoreau—and adopted their vision of nature as god. Surrounded by the squalor of Gilded Age New York City, Miller decided that the American Indians, surrounded by nature, lived a far purer life than white Americans. In Europe Miller was fascinated by thinkers like Nietzsche, Freud, and Henri Bergson, who portrayed humans as puppets on the hand of a powerful and creative nature.

At age twenty-one Miller made a run for it, leaving New York for the American West. This turned out to be a traumatic experience for Miller, for in his fertile imagination he had turned the West into a transcendentalist symbol that the real West could never live up to. Miller's trip was also inspired—he later told a French biographer—by growing up during the presidency of Teddy Roosevelt, who had celebrated the West as a realm of adventure and vigor, an image irresistible to any American teenage boy. Miller would be not just a cowboy hero, but a spiritual cowboy. Instead, Miller ended up working in very mundane jobs on a California ranch and a lemon grove, "working like a slave...wretched, forlorn, miserable…"[4] The discrepancy between the real West and the West of his longings first hit him when he stepped off the train in Arizona. Miller recalled this shock in the autobiographical *Tropic of Capricorn*, the companion to *Tropic of Cancer*. It is worth quoting this experience at length, since the conflict between reality and imagination would be the key to Miller's experience of the Grand Canyon three decades later:

> I remember now that it was already night when I first set foot on Arizona soil. Just light enough to catch the last glimpse of a fading mesa. I am walking through the main street of a little town whose name is lost. What am I doing here on this street, in this town? Why, I am in love with Arizona, an Arizona of the mind which I search for in vain with my two good eyes. In the train there was still with me an Arizona which I had brought from New York—even after we had crossed the state line. Was there not a bridge over a canyon which had startled me out of my reverie? A bridge such as I had never seen before, a natural bridge created by a cataclysmic eruption thousands of years ago? And over this bridge I had seen a man crossing, a man who looked like an Indian, and he was riding a horse and there was a long saddlebag hanging beside the stirrup. A natural millenary bridge which in the dying sun with air so clear looked like the youngest, newest bridge imaginable. And over that bridge so strong, so durable, there passed, praise be to God, just a man and a horse, nothing more. This then was Arizona, and Arizona was not a figment of the imagination but the imagination itself dressed as a horse and rider. And this was even more than the imagination itself because there was no aura of ambiguity but only sharp and dead isolate the thing itself which was the dream and the dreamer himself seated on horseback. And as the train stops I put my foot down and my foot has put a deep hole in the dream: I am in the Arizona town which is listed in the timetable and it is only the geographical Arizona which anybody can visit who has the money. I am walking along the main street with a valise and I see hamburger sandwiches and real estate offices. I feel so terribly deceived that I begin to weep. It is dark now and I stand at the end of a street, where the desert begins, and I weep like a fool.[5]

Three decades later when Miller planned his real trip across America, he seemed eager to give the Southwest another, more mature test. "I want desperately to get to Arizona," he wrote to his Paris publisher.[6] This time he planned to get to the Grand Canyon. He even planned a chapter about the Grand Canyon, titled "The Grand Canyon and the Culebra Cut." It's not too hard to guess the theme of this chapter. The Culebra Cut was the man-made canyon across the Panamanian continental divide, cut for the Panama Canal. The Culebra Cut was originally a French project, but it was crippled by disease, bankruptcy, and a serious underestimation of the difficulty of carving canyons. When the Americans took over building the canal, the Culebra Cut so plagued them with landslides that some experts predicted that the canal was hopeless. When the Cut was completed, it was hailed as the greatest engineering triumph in human history. Given Miller's skepticism about technological progress, we can guess that he was planning to use the Grand Canyon to ridicule the pride of humans in their puny little canyons. Yet the Culebra Cut wouldn't show up in Miller's writing about the Grand Canyon; it seems that his real experience of the canyon swept aside his polemical schemes.

When Miller got to New York City he talked a publisher into grubstaking his trip in exchange for a book about America, though the publisher imposed one rule: no sex. Miller bought a car and set forth to explore America by road. In 1940 it was still a daring idea to travel across the whole country by car. Rt. 66 was barely a decade old, and most roads, especially out west, were still dirt. There were few highway services like motels and gas stations. *On the Road* and *Travels with Charley* were two decades in the future; indeed, Miller's road trip helped to create them and many other literary road trips. Miller's plan was even more adventuresome because: "I had never owned a car, didn't know how to drive one even."[7] He took a few driving lessons from poet Kenneth Patchen and hit the road.

Miller envisioned his trip as a Whitmanesque adventure. For a notebook he obtained from a publisher the unbound proof pages of *Leaves of Grass* and wrote on the backsides. Yet Miller must have realized before he started that he could not emulate Whitman's celebration of America. Miller had already decided that his book's title would be *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, meaning that America's technological comfort only housed a poverty of values and human spirit. Right from the start Miller began attacking America. Sometimes these complaints were perceptive: "Topographically the country is magnificent—and terrifying. Why terrifying? Because nowhere else in the world is the divorce between man and nature so complete."[8] Yet Miller's scathing attacks were often embarrassingly overwrought even by the standards of 1930s left-wing literary culture. Considering that he was writing when Hitler was conquering Europe, which prompted the devoted pacifist Albert Einstein to urge pacifists to join the army and which prompted the communist Woody Guthrie to write patriotic ballads, Miller's alienation from America seems even more obsessive. Indeed, Miller finished his manuscript after Pearl Harbor, and his publisher backed out, for no one was in the mood for virulent America-bashing.

In *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* it soon becomes clear that Miller's 1940-41 journey is guided by the same Romantic philosophy and longing as his 1913 journey. Between Pittsburgh and Youngstown, "an Inferno which exceeds anything that Dante imagined, the idea suddenly came to me that I ought to have an American Indian by my side, that he ought to share this voyage with me, communicate to me silently or otherwise his emotions and reflections…Imagine the two of us standing in contemplation before the hideous grandeur of one of those steel mills…I can almost hear him thinking—'So it was for this that you deprived us of our birthright…burned our homes, massacred our women and children, poisoned our souls, broke every treaty which you made with us and left us to die…'"[9]

After a scorched-earth campaign in which Miller criticizes everything about America except for a few obscure artists and religious eccentrics, he arrives in the Southwest, and here his mood changes:

> Somehow, ever since I hit Tucumcari I have become completely disoriented. On the license plates in New Mexico it reads: "The Land of Enchantment." And that it is, by God! There's a huge rectangle which embraces parts of four states—Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona—and which is nothing but enchantment, sorcery, illusionismus, phantasmagoria. Perhaps the secret of the American continent is contained in this wild, forbidding and partially unexplored territory. It is the land of the Indian par excellence. Everything is hypnagogic, chthonian and super-celestial. Here nature has gone gaga and dada. Man is just an irruption, like a wart or a pimple. Man is not wanted here. Red men, yes, but then they are so far removed from what we think of as man that they seem like another species. Embedded in the rocks are their glyphs and hieroglyphs. Not to speak of the footprints of dinosaurs and other lumbering antediluvian beasts. When you come to the Grand Canyon it's as though Nature were breaking out into supplication.[10]

Driving toward Cameron and the canyon, Miller had an experience similar to his 1913 train window vision of the dreamlike Indian horseman: "For about forty miles I don't think I passed a human habitation…Three cars passed me and then there was a stretch of silence and emptiness, a steady, sinister ebbing of all human life, of plant and vegetable life, of light itself. Suddenly, out of nowhere, it seemed, three horsemen...just materialized, as it were…

then spurred their horses on into the phantasmal emptiness of dusk, disappearing in the space of a few seconds. What was amazing to me was that they seemed to have a sense of direction; they galloped off as if they were going somewhere when obviously there was nowhere to go to."[11] The similarity of this experience with his *Tropic of Capricorn* experience might make us wonder if Miller was plagiarizing himself or posing for literary effect, but in fact his Grand Canyon visit is also recorded in his letters to his French lady friend Anaïs Nin, and in these letters his experiences, including the surrealistic horsemen, are often described even more vividly and emotionally than in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*. This similarity between Miller's 1913 and 1941 experiences should have made Miller nervous, for his youthful journey had ended in tearful disillusionment. If Miller now feared putting his foot through his Romantic dream again, he was about to face the ultimate test, the ultimate Southwestern landscape. The Grand Canyon had been hyped by everyone from artists to travel writers to the Santa Fe Railway. Could the reality possibly match the dream? From Cameron, where Miller camped in the back seat of his car, he wrote to Nin: "Tomorrow the grandiose will reach its apotheosis at Grand Canyon. The river gorge here is about 300 ft. deep and looks impressive in its moonlike desolation. But at Grand Canyon it is one mile deep!!"[12] Miller was also seeking spiritual depths at the Grand Canyon. From Albuquerque he had written to Nin that he was now heading for "...the Canyon, which I love—next to Tibet the greatest spot on earth."[13]

Henry Miller's first experience of the Grand Canyon was intense, including intense relief, for the canyon did indeed live up to his dream. On May 1, 1941, he wrote to Anaïs Nin from the Bright Angel Lodge: "First glimpses of canyon suburb—no deception, no letdown. In fact I trembled looking into it and got to laughing. I took a room for a week."[14]

In *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* Miller not only trembles but weeps with joy, tears that finally wipe away and cancel out the tears of disillusionment he shed as a young man. The Lost Generation had been disillusioned so many times that finally they refused to believe in anything; they had made a god out of disillusionment; but now, after all the phoniness Miller had found in his trip across America, here was something real, overwhelmingly real, actually surreal, so surreal that it wildly surpassed all the surrealistic art and writing he had admired:

> It's mad, completely mad, and at the same time so grandiose, so sublime, so illusory, that when you come upon it for the first time you break down and weep with joy. I did, at least. For over thirty years I had been aching to see this huge hole in the earth. Like Phaestos, Mycenae, Epidauros, it is one of the few spots on earth which not only come up to all expectation but surpass it. My friend Bushman, who had been a guide here for a number of years, had told me some fantastic stories about the Grand Canyon. I can believe anything that any one might tell me about it, whether it has to do with geological eras and formations, freaks of nature in animal or plant life, or Indian legends. If some one were to tell me that the peaks and mesas and amphitheatres which are so fittingly called Tower of Set, Cheop's Pyramid, Shiva Temple, Osiris Temple, Isis Temple, etc. were the creation of fugitive Egyptians, Chinese or Tibetans, I would lend a credulous ear. The Grand Canyon is an enigma and no matter how much we learn we shall never know the ultimate truth about it…[15]

Two days after his arrival at the canyon Miller wrote to Nin:

> "Well, it's one of the places on earth I dearly wanted to see. It's no letdown. The rocks are cut as to resemble the facades of Hindu or Siamese temples. Some of the rocks which jut up alone and isolate are named after ancient temples. It is a tremendous drama of geology. I'll send you a little book on it soon—it's fascinating. Now it's pouring (we've had unusual weather in this country where it's so dry) and the canyon is steaming—like a huge cauldron. At night, when you can see nothing, it is awesome. You feel this big hole—a mile deep. I haven't been down it yet—afraid to walk it because I might not get up—it's like climbing up five Empire State Buildings…I'd like to live down at the bottom for a week or so. Only Indians could live in such a place."[16]

Miller stretched his stay at the canyon to ten days. On day seven he reported to Nin: "I didn't get down in the Canyon—just walked and drove around the rim, viewing it from all angles in all sorts of atmospheric conditions. It changes perpetually, like a chameleon."[17] Miller also reported that "I gave up all medicines about 3 days ago—and, oddly enuf, I feel better…Must be psychological too…" He closed with: "The sky now is perfect here—especially toward sunset. That electric blue I first noticed in Greece. And the stars at night like pinpricks on a cloth of unseizable velvet. The canyon itself is covered with green, a faded Byzantine green, of suede. Striking. I don't go into it in a letter because I want to write about it at length. I'm grateful to have seen it. One of the wonders of the universe."[18]

In *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, Miller dwelled on several canyon experiences. The sight of a discarded newspaper served as a symbol of the smallness of human lives compared with geological time:

> …as I was taking my customary promenade along the rim of the Canyon, the sight of a funny sheet (Prince Valiant was what caught my eye) lying on the edge of the abyss awakened curious

reflections. What can possibly appear more futile, sterile and insignificant in the presence of such a vast and mysterious spectacle as the Grand Canyon than the Sunday comic sheet? There it lay, carelessly tossed aside by an indifferent reader, the least wind ready to lift it aloft and blow it to extinction. Behind this gaudy-colored sheet, requiring for its creation the energies of countless men, the varied resources of Nature, the feeble desires of over-fed children, lay the whole story of the culmination of our Western civilization.[19]

As Miller walked among the tourists, he "caught the weirdest fragments of conversation, startling because so unrelated to the nature of the place."[20] Miller couldn't resist making fun of tourists who were more interested in their Western-style fashions, their ice cream, or their social pretensions than in the Grand Canyon.

In front of Verkamp's store Miller ran into young Jack Verkamp polishing the rim telescope. When Jack mentioned that his dad's store sold film, Miller was almost triggered into another tirade against American commercial values. But Miller seems to have recognized the absurdity of venting against a young boy who lived on the edge of the canyon and obviously loved the canyon, so for once in the book Miller lightened up and wrote a double-edged tirade that was also a parody of his own self-righteousness:

> But to him everything was phenomenal and interesting, including the hotel on the opposite side of the canyon—because you could see it clearly through the telescope. "Have you seen the large painting of the Canyon in my father's shop?" he asked, as I was about to leave him. "It's a phenomenal piece of work." I told him bluntly I had no intention of looking at it…He looked aggrieved, wounded, utterly amazed that I should not care to see one of the greatest reproductions of Nature by the hand of man. "When you get a little more sense," I said, "maybe it won't seem so wonderful to you…" I was fuming to think that a young boy should have nothing better to do than try to waylay tourists for his father at that hour of the morning. Pretending to be fixing the telescope, polishing it, and so on, and then pulling off that nonsense about "man imitating God's handiwork"—on a piece of canvas, no less, when there before one's eyes was God himself in all his glory, manifesting his grandeur without the aid or intervention of man. All to sell you a fossil or a string of beads or some photographic film. Reminded me of the bazaars of Lourdes.[21]

Miller devoted a chapter to "The Desert Rat," a dusty old prospector with whom Miller talked for several hours over lunch at the Bright Angel Lodge. "He went on about the virtue of living alone in the desert, of living with the stars and rocks, studying the earth, listening to one's own voice, wondering about Creation…"[22] The hermit talked about how the land spoke to him more profoundly than any book could, about the wisdom of the earth and of the Indians, about the craziness of cities and civilization. To Nin, Miller called this "The best talk I've had with anyone since leaving New York. All I told you of my intuitions about the Indians…he confirmed. He knows them—lived with them. Is a solitary prospector in the desert near Barstow, Cal. And a mystic and philosopher...And at the end he apologized for "not being educated." I learned more from him than from all the professors."[23]

There was a reason why Henry Miller became so absorbed in a conversation about nature vs. cities, earth vs. books, simplicity vs. stylish cafes. This was the very argument that Miller was waging within himself as he tried to figure out where to go and what to do with the rest of his life. This internal argument surfaced in the second letter he wrote to Nin from the Grand Canyon as he coaxed himself toward a different life than the one he had lived in Paris: "Of course I realize the change that is coming. I ask nothing better than to sit down and live simply…I know how to go without and not feel disoriented. I don't even miss the movies."[24]

Only nine days after Miller left the Grand Canyon, even as he was settling into Hollywood, it seems he was feeling a new direction, at least subconsciously. He wrote to Nin about his plans: "Guess it will be San Francisco next, though I'm not sure. May stop off in between at Big Sur about which Robinson Jeffers wrote—the wildest part of the Pacific Coast."[25] It would be Big Sur where Miller would spend sixteen years in a no-electricity cabin perched atop cliffs above the ocean, cliffs a bit like Grand Canyon cliffs. He would live a life closer to that of the Mohave Desert prospector than to that of Paris cafes, theaters, and art galleries. On his way up the Pacific Coast Miller had checked out Carmel, but he told Nin: "Didn't like the looks of the place—so arty."[26] In Paris Henry Miller had reveled in the arty, but now he was turning his back on art in favor of nature—he was even proud of himself for refusing to take a few steps into Verkamp's and see art of the Grand Canyon when he could embrace the real thing.

In her diary Anaïs Nin observed Miller's struggle for direction. In December of 1940 Miller returned from the American South to New York City, where Nin was living. She wrote: "Henry returns from his wanderings. He tells me about America… He has been looking for something to love. Nature, yes, that was extraordinary. He tells me about a stalactite cave, the wonder of it…Henry is not impressed with size, power. He looks for a deeper America."[27] He would soon set out for the West.

In the end, it's not possible to prove how much influence the Grand Canyon had upon Henry Miller's change of direction. He never stated this in print. Miller's biographers and scholars often skim over the whole *Night-*

mare road trip around America, and barely mention the Grand Canyon; they are interested mainly in Miller's novels; and they come from an academic literary culture where the only reality is human culture and where it is hard to imagine nature having anything important to say to anyone. But all the indications are that Miller's encounter with the Grand Canyon fit powerfully into his mid-life crisis and helped to resolve it. As a youth Miller had felt a powerful pull to the American Southwest, but then he had lost faith in his own impulses, then lost faith in America entirely. Miller's homecoming road trip around America did little to heal his alienation from a phony society, but he did discover that America did hold something powerfully real, powerfully surreal, something beside which human society didn't really matter, something that allowed him to return home, to begin a new life atop a remote cliff.

Miller did give us one strong hint about the influence of the Grand Canyon upon him. After he settled in Big Sur he sought out and became close friends with two people who were closely associated with the Grand Canyon and the Southwest, Lawrence Clark Powell and Edwin Corle. Lawrence Clark Powell was a Southwestern historian, and the librarian at UCLA. Back in 1932 Powell and Miller had taught English at the same boy's school in Dijon, France. Now both found a spiritual home in the American West. "If an astrologer had told Henry Miller," wrote Powell in 1960, "thirty years ago in Paris that the crowning years of his life would be spent on an isolated stretch of the Central California coast, he would have changed astrologers."[28] Powell became Miller's lifeline to the literary world, sending him a constant stream of books from the UCLA library. Edwin Corle was a novelist, who would write the introduction to one of Miller's novels. Corle also wrote the mid-century's most popular book about the Grand Canyon, *Listen, Bright Angel*. This title should have caught the imagination of a man who had spent ten days at the Bright Angel Lodge trying to listen to his own heart, and who had sat for hours in the Bright Angel Restaurant listening to a desert hermit talk about listening to nature.

In 1975 a Rolling Stone reporter went to interview Miller and found: "On one wall is a hand-inscribed poster listing the names of scores of places Miller has visited around the world—with marginal comments." It included: "Grand Canyon (still the best)."[29]

(Endnotes)
1, 2 Ibid, p. 10.
3 Ibid, p. 14.
4 Miller, Tropic of Capricorn (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 151. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic Press.
5 Ibid, p. 152.
6 From proposal for American travel book, quoted in Jay Martin, Always Merry and Bright: The Life of Henry Miller (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1978), p. 372.
7 The Air-Conditioned Nightmare, p. 240.
8 Ibid, p. 19-20.
9 Ibid, p.28-9.
10 Ibid, p. 239.
11 Ibid, p. 238.
12 Henry Miller, Letters to Anais Nin, edited and introduced by Gunther Stuhlmann (New York: George Putnam's Sons, 1965), p. 257. Reprinted with permission of Barbara Stuhlmann and the Anais Nin Trust.
13 Ibid, p, 255.
14 Ibid, p. 258.
15 The Air-Conditioned Nightmare, p. 240.
16 Letters to Anais Nin, p. 258.
17 Ibid, p. 260.
18 Ibid, p. 261.
19 The Air-Conditioned Nightmare, p. 227.
20 Ibid, p. 219.
21 Ibid, p. 221-2.
22 Ibid, p. 223.
23 Letters to Anais Nin, p. 260.
24 Ibid, p. 259.
25 Ibid, p. 265.
26 Ibid, p. 266.
27 Anais Nin, The Diary of Anais Nin, Volume Three, 1939-1944 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969), p. 55. Copyright renewed 1997 by Rupert Pole and Gunther Stuhlmann. Reprinted with permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.
28 Lawrence Clark Powell, in Conversations with Henry Miller, edited by Frank Kersnowski and Alice Hughes, (Jackson, Ms.: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), p. 11.
29 Jonathan Cott, in ibid, p. 182.

October Outing

GRAND CANYON HISTORICAL SOCIETY OUTING ON OCTOBER 4, 2008 AT PAGE, ARIZONA.

by Nancy R. Green, GCHS Secretary

Our original plan was to tour Antelope Canyon in the morning and the John Wesley Powell Memorial Museum in the afternoon. The morning dawned, or rather – there was no dawn, due to the heavy, hanging grey clouds. As it got closer to our meeting time, the rain changed from an occasional sprinkle to a steady rain. Upon consulting the NOA weather radio, the first statements concerned the probability of flash floods, and warnings not to enter slot canyons. Hmmmm. Sadly, but safely we cancelled the canyon tour. We were fortunate enough to be able to reschedule our tour at the museum for the morning.

The tour was conducted by Mark Law, Director of Programming for the museum. He's better known to some of us as a former river ranger at Grand Canyon, now retired. His personal interests, as well as his work at the museum, made him a knowledgeable lecturer. He informed us that this museum was originally built in memory of the Page Work Camps during the building of the Glen Canyon Dam.

John Wesley Powell was born on March 24, 1834 in Mount Morris, New York. His father, a Methodist clergyman, named him after the founder of the Methodist church. The family moved frequently – to Ohio in 1838, Wisconsin in 1846, and Illinois in 1851. Education was always important to young Powell, and he was fascinated with science. He spent time touring around collecting specimens, particularly mollusks, shells and minerals. He rowed on the Mississippi, Ohio and Illinois Rivers, collecting specimens along the way. After a year of college, he began teaching in Jefferson County,

Wisconsin in a one room schoolhouse in 1852 for fourteen dollars a month. He met his first cousin, Emma Dean, in 1855. Apparently romances between first cousins were common then, and their romance bloomed.

1861 was a happy and momentous year for John. He married his sweetheart, Emma, and enlisted in the Illinois Infantry. 1862 was momentous for a more tragic reason. Powell raised his right hand to signal Fire! during the Battle of Shiloh on April 6. He was struck in the wrist by a bullet. The decision was made to amputate his right arm. Incredibly, he continued to serve in the Union Army. Out of consideration for his wounds, his wife was allowed to accompany him in the field to attend to his medical needs. It still proved to be too much for him, so he requested to be relieved of his duties. However – he waited until near the end of the Civil War to do so. He took part in the Battle of Vicksburg, which took place from April 15-July 4. He did have to leave during part of that time for further surgery. During his convalescence he was notified he had been promoted to major. Even though he achieved higher rank after that, he always preferred to be addressed as Major Powell. It wasn't until January of 1865 that he formally requested resignation from the Army due to his disability.

Powell then accepted a professorship at Illinois Wesleyan University teaching geology. In 1867 the Powells took off on a scientific expedition with sixteen students to Colorado. Emma became the first woman to summit Pikes Peak. John looked at the maps of the Great Southwest and saw the huge blank spot indicating a totally unexplored region around and through the Grand Canyon. The seeds were planted for a future journey down the Colorado River.

In 1869 Powell's first river trip took place. He published this first account under the title "New Tracks in North America." His famous book would not be published until 1875. That actually was a composite of both of his trips down the river. In 1870 he went back to the region to pre-supply his planned expedition for 1871. Jacob Hamblin and Powell got a wagon load of lumber from Kanab and proceeded to the vicinity of today's Lee's Ferry. Powell recognized that this area was the only place for hundreds of miles where the Colorado could be forded. He used the lumber to build a raft to cross the river so they could continue on to the Hopi Mesas.

He also wanted to check on what could have happened to the three men who left the '69 trip at Separation Rapid. The conjecture on that episode goes on until today. Separation isn't now and never was a killer, scary rapid. So why did the men really leave? The speculation is that the CFS of the river during that trip was 60,000 -70,000. There is a controversy that although contracts were signed for completion of the voyage, there really wasn't any money to be had for the men. Powell accepted the explanation from translator Jacob Hamblin that the three explorers were killed by Indians who had mistaken the men for some miners who had raped a Hualapai woman. But, years later, in the Toquerville City Hall basement, letters were uncovered stating that the three men showed up there. What happened to them after that remains a mystery. There also was a watch which belonged to one of the three men. It kept showing up in strange places – in the hand of a Mormon farmer and also in the hand of an Indian. Hmmm.

In 1871 the second Powell expedition took place. John learned from his mistakes from the first voyage. This group was much more qualified for the rigors and science needed for a canyon exploration. It was also a better supplied trip, with equipment and food being distributed evenly between the boats in the event of an accident. The group exited the canyon at Kanab Wash.

It should also be noted that Emma gave birth to a baby girl on September 8, 1871 – Mary Dean.

It is interesting to note that other participants in the two Grand Canyon voyages also kept journals which often had discrepancies from Powell's account.

Powell was one of the earliest people to really understand the unique configuration and interrelationship of the land of the Southwest. He truly saw how critical a part water would play in the settlement and development of the deserts of the Southwest. In 1878 he wrote a report to the Secretary of the Interior on the arid regions of the United States and suggested a new plan for settling the Western territories.

In 1879 he took a leading role in helping to create the United States Geological Survey. He also was appointed Director of the Bureau of Ethnology. In 1881 he accepted the Directorship of the U.S.G.S.

In 1888 Powell was one of the 33 men who founded the National Geographic Society. That same year he began irrigation surveys in the West which were the forerunners to the Bureau of Reclamation.

In 1894 Powell resigned from the U.S.G.S. and began a gradual withdrawal from public life. John Wesley Powell died on September 23, 1902 at his summer home in Haven, Maine at the age of 68.

His voyages and explorations remain an astounding feat of perseverance and scientific discovery. What a man of influence and inspiration he was, with reverberations all the way to today.

Grand Canyon Book Club

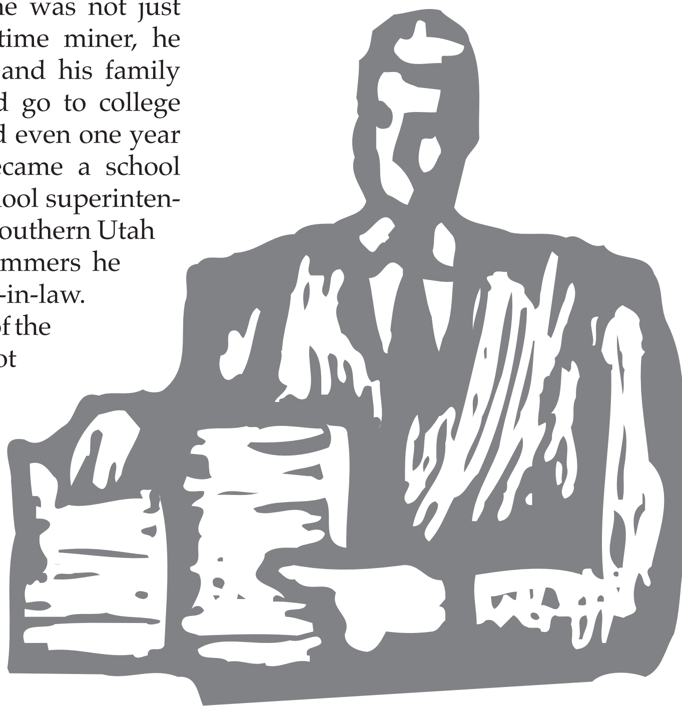
by Betty Upchurch

The Grand Canyon Book Club met on Tuesday, November 18, to discuss the book *Dave Rust: A Life in the Canyons* by Frederick H. Swanson. Dave Rust is known in Grand Canyon history for his work building the trail from the North Rim, along Bright Angel Creek, to the Colorado River. He also built the cable car across the Colorado to create a route from the South Rim to the North Rim. Rust Camp provided accommodations for tourists near what is now Phantom Ranch. Rust completed all of this work for his ambitious,flamboyant father-in-law, Dee Woolley, of Kanab, Utah. Woolley wanted to see the North Rim become as popular a tourist attraction as the South Rim, and Dave Rust was willing to risk his health for his father-in-law's dream. However, Swanson devotes only about five of the nineteen chapters of the book covering these few years of the life of Dave Rust. The author's extensive research has brought the rest of the complex life of Dave Rust to our attention.

As Rust grew up he was not just a cowboy and part time miner, he wanted to learn. He and his family sacrificed so he could go to college at Brigham Young and even one year at Stanford. Dave became a school teacher and then a school superintendent in several small southern Utah towns. During his summers he worked for his father-in-law. However, the bottom of the Grand Canyon was not much of a draw for Dave where he felt the hemmed-in oppression of the inner gorge. He loved the wide-open views from promontories. These views led to Dave's long career as a guide on the Colorado Plateau.

Dave guided for George Fraser, a rich Easterner, who wanted an adventure in the Southwest. Fraser and Rust, though from very different circumstances, became great friends, took several trips together, and wrote countless letters. They would stand together on the same promontories where the geologist Clarence Dutton had been and read from Dutton's Tertiary History which Dave carried in his saddlebag. Fraser's enthusiasm and friendship sent many more clients to Rust over the years. Rust guided very small groups all over the Colorado Plateau. Swanson was able to discover some of Dave's terse journals and piece them together with the accounts written by the tourists that Dave guided. Together these writings bring to life Dave Rust and the land he loved.

The Book Club members appreciated Fred Swanson's meticulous research. He took the brief character of Dave Rust in Grand Canyon history and filled out the details to make a story of an interesting, educated man of great common sense, humor, and skill.



Calendar continued from page 3

Sunday April 19, 2009
Prescott
Beyond Guard Towers and Barbed Wire: Austrian Prisoners of War at Navajo Ordinance Depot.
John Westerlund

Wednesday April 29, 2009
Flagstaff
California Condors in Arizona!
Kathy Sullivan

Wednesday May 6, 2009
Glendale
Science on the Edge: Preserving Grand Canyon National Park's Natural and Cultural Resources.
Martha Hahn

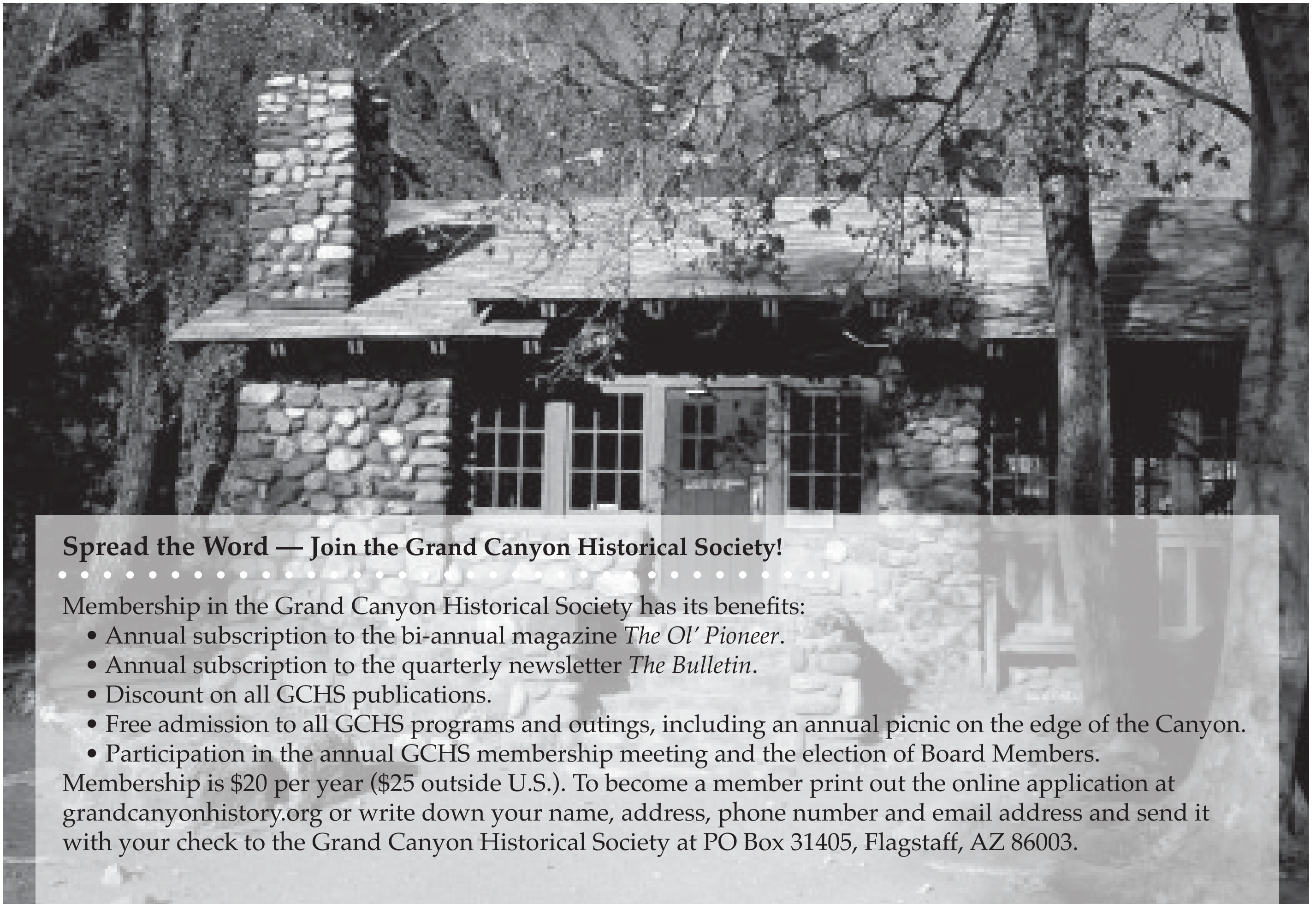
Sunday May 17, 2009
Prescott
Canyon Experiences: Sublime to Silly
Gary Ladd

Wednesday May 20, 2009
Flagstaff
The Resurrection of Glen Canyon
Annette McGivney and James Kay

Thursday May 21, 2009
Glendale
Tracing the Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plareau
Wayne Ranney

Thursday June 18, 2009
Glendale
The 1956 Grand Canyon Air Disaster: The Legends, Legacies and Mysteries of TWA Flight 2 and United Flight 718.
Dan Driskill

For detailed information visit: www.grandcanyon.org



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- Participation in the annual GCHS membership meeting and the election of Board Members.

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