

# The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

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# President's Letter

With temperatures here in Phoenix breaking the 110 degree mark, this is the time of year that I especially miss my hometown of Flagstaff and find myself wanting to escape to the cool rims of the canyon. Hopefully I will see some of you at our annual GCHS picnic at Shoshone Point where we will enjoy the combination of cool breezes, hot dogs, killer views and the company of fellow canyon enthusiasts. Although summer is traditionally a time for picnics, vacations and just taking it easy, there are also a couple of important GCHS events on the horizon of which members should be aware: nominations for the board of directors and preparations for a 2012 history symposium.

Over the next couple months we will be looking for nominees to the Grand Canyon Historical Society Board of Directors. In the fall, new board members will be elected by members from the slate of nominees. Once elected, board members serve a three-year term. Board member responsibilities include providing input on major GCHS decisions, selecting scholarship and award winners, and assisting with outings, announcements and other GCHS projects and events. During the fall board meeting, society officers are elected from the serving board members.

Being a board member or officer does not require any special skills or background, nor does it require that you to live near the canyon (many of us do not). Much of the society business is conducted via email and telephone. What it does require is an interest and love of Grand Canyon history, a willingness to help out where needed and a desire to see the society remain strong and active into the future. The all-volunteer GCHS board and officers are the driving engine of the organization – without their support and effort, the society would not exist. If you (or somebody you know), would make a good candidate for the board, please consider submitting a nomination (and brief biography) to myself or GCHS Secretary Amy Horn.

Having a strong board will be especially important over the next couple years if we are to be successful with plans for another Grand Canyon History Symposium in early 2012 (to coincide with the Arizona statehood centennial). Planning, coordinating and hosting an event of that size will require significant resources and effort on everything from reserving facilities to selecting presenters and speakers to coordinating registration and communication activities. Aside from the board and other symposium partner groups, there will be a big need for additional symposium volunteers over the next year and a half. We have already received responses and offers to help from a number of members (Thank you!), but we will likely need some more. If you are interested in participating, please contact either myself or Lee Albertson (if you have not done so already). We have several meetings in the near future with key symposium partners.

Erik Berg  
GCHS President

Cover: John Hance, with niece Eva Hance, on South Rim summer 1917, one of the last known photos of Hance taken before his death in January 1919. Courtesy of Camp Verde Historical Society

*The Ol' Pioneer* submission deadlines are going to be roughly January, April, July and October and we will publish either three or four issues a year, depending on content volume.

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Grand Canyon Historical Society

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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 by the GRAND CANYON HISTORICAL SOCIETY in conjunction with *The Bulletin*, an informational newsletter. 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 31405 Flagstaff, AZ 86002. *The Ol' Pioneer* magazine is copyrighted by the Grand Canyon Historical Society, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form without permission of the publisher.

Editor: Mary Williams  
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Submissions to *The Bulletin* should be sent to Karen Greig, kgreig@yahoo.com

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# Lewis Schellbach's Log Books: Part 2

by Traci Wyrick

The following are the last diary entries I've selected from 1943. I've also listed several more names my Grandfather referenced from that year, and added corrections and/or new information from the Winter 2010 issue of *The Ol' Pioneer*.

~

Thursday Oct. 7, 1943

On duty at Yavapai. Signed monthly report and letter to McDougall, given to typist to write on Tuesday.

At Yavapai cleaned and washed all the big windows. Only 12 persons visited the station in a.m. Some 700 troops due in late this afternoon to stay until Saturday or Sunday. Four to five special lectures are arranged for them tomorrow.

Sky full of thunderheads and a light sprinkle of rain about 1:30 p.m. (war time).

~

Friday Oct. 8, 1943

A.M. duty at Yavapai, arranging seating in preparation for 9:00 a.m. lecture to members of the armed forces. 700 arrived last night, with their trucks, jeeps and guns. It is an artillery outfit. Presented four lectures this day 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 3:30 p.m.. Total attendance 770.

Sold 55 landscapes to troops and one box of rocks. This was to be my day off, but because of the troops, the absence of Supt. H.C.B., had to carry on. Sunday is to be my day off at Yavapai.

~

Saturday Oct. 9, 1943

On duty early at Yavapai for general clean up, because of the debris left by troops in the form of cigarette butts, candy wrappers, etc. Talk in-



Grand Canyon National Park Naturalist, Lewis Schellebach, at work.

side, too cool on the parapet. Supt. Bryant returned. To movies in the evening.

~

Sunday Oct. 10, 1943

Rain during night. (11:00 p.m. MST) On duty at Yavapai. No day off this week just past. Special lecture 2:45 p.m. to State Teachers College, Flag. Group of naval cadets public speaking class, Dr. Allen.

Reg. talk 3:30 p.m. to visitors. Dinner with family at El Tovar.

~

Thursday Oct. 14, 1943

Many of the troops hiked down into the Canyon this day. Presented a lecture to a group of troops at 9:30 a.m. On duty at Yavapai.

At noon the two princes' arrived

at Yavapai with their retinue, Supt. Bryant, Asst. Supt. Davis and Chief Ranger Bill. They were Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Feisal and his brother, Prince Khalid, several attendants, they were being escorted by a member of the State Dept.

In the p.m. a tea was given them by Mrs. Bryant and Ethyl (Mrs. S.) helped and poured tea and coffee.

Numbers of troops visited Yavapai throughout the day.

~

Wednesday Oct. 27, 1943

Opened Yavapai, gave general clean up and then to Hdq. for staff meeting until 12:05 p.m.

P.M. stocked Yavapai with paper towel and History Bulletins.

At 3:30 p.m. lecture, there was a fundamentalist in the audience. When questions were asked for, he





took the floor and tried to preach to the group—much to their annoyance and disgust. I did not argue, telling he was at liberty to believe anything he desired and that I was presenting geology and not religion. The group shut him up. Most annoying—

~

People mentioned in last half of 1943:  
H.C. Bryant

Grand Canyon's Park Superintendent. Among his more important duties, he enjoyed capturing insects for the Naturalist's department.

Ernie Ensor

A jack-of-all-trades who was liked by all. He helped Schellbach in washing windows and waxing floors at Yavapai Observation Station and improved the smooth operation of the Interpretive Division from the nuts and bolts standpoint.

Ed Cummings

Head Mule Skinner for Fred Harvey company. His wife, Ida, ran the soda fountain at Babbitt's. Ed was an amateur naturalist, and kept an eye out for finding new things he figured Schellbach would like to know about.

M.R. Tillotson

Regional Director. He and Schellbach were good friends, even though they didn't always agree on things.

Ethyl

Schellbach's wife.

Mrs. Cotter

Wife of Post Office clerk ?

Miss Gene Cummings

hired through the GCNHA to help with the library.

Miss Helen Lawton

Workshop visitor

Col. White a superintendant ?

Payne a carpenter ?

Dean Daisy

Helped clean exhibit cases at

Yavapai, lived close to Schellbach, possibly a ranger ?

Dr. Paul Lotz ?

John Cooke

Worked at the disposal plant ?

Ed Laws

Ranger

Porquett

person associated with Phantom Ranch

Jonnie

Steno

Les Kennedy

Ranger

Carl P. Russell

Chief Naturalist at Chicago headquarters

Roy Fancher

mechanic

Carrells, Clark

engineer

Mrs. Spencer

possibly associated with a man named Spencer at the Hopi House.

Burns

Museum Chief

Sam King

Ranger

Barbara Eppler

Steno at headquarters

Inez Haring

biologist, specializing in mosses and lichens

Bert Lauzon

Ranger and son-in-law of William Wallace Bass. Bert was the father of Hubert Lauzon and grandfather of Robert and Patrick Lauzon

Corrections and/or additions:

Hugh Waesche: a geologist and professor at VA Polytechnic Inst. In Balcksburg, VA.

Frank Kitteridge: Acting superintendent of GCNP from Jan 24, 1940 to June 30, 1941

Judd: a common Mormon name, likely from a family out of Kanab.

Spelling corrections:

Rose Collum is Collom.

Mrs. Frank Ostler is Osler.

Ranger Harthon Bill is Harlin.

Look for the beginning of 1944's diary selections in a future issue of *The Ol' Pioneer*.

# Tall Cliffs and Tall Tales: The Origins of John Hance

by Don Lago

There are a lot of things about John Hance that are foggy.

For starters, there was his tale about snowshoeing across the canyon, on top of the fog. This story worked best when there was mist shrouding the canyon. John Hance walked up to guests sitting on the El Tovar Hotel porch, snowshoes slung over his shoulder, and announced that the fog was looking thick enough for him to walk on it across the canyon. He walked up to the rim, stuck a foot out to test the fog, and said he'd go up to Yaki Point to make the crossing. He told guests to watch for his campfire on the North Rim that night. When Hance saw those guests the next day he announced that he'd returned, and if they said they hadn't seen his campfire, he answered that of course the fog was too thick to see through it. Hance told of how one time the fog thinned out before he'd made it across, and he was lucky to reach Zoroaster Temple, atop which he was stranded for days without a thing to eat. The fog refused to thicken, but after days of losing weight, Hance was thin enough to walk atop the thinner fog.

For over thirty years John Hance told tall tales to Grand Canyon visitors, and they made Hance himself into a tourist attraction. John Hance was the first white settler at the canyon, and the first prospector to build a trail to the canyon bottom. When tourists began showing up at Hance's cabin on the rim, Hance became the first tourist host and guide. John Hance became such a legend that when the Santa Fe Railway arrived, it hired him just to guide and entertain tourists. Visitors who wrote about their canyon experiences often included their encounter with John Hance. Novelist Hamlin Garland called him "a powerful and astonishing fictionist. Consciously he is a teller of whopping lies. Unconsciously he is one of the

most dramatic and picturesque natural raconteurs I have ever met."<sup>1</sup>

John Hance's tall tales included some tales about his own life, which has left some of the basic facts about his life obscure or distorted. In the case of his Civil War record, he had a good motive for lying. But Hance played games even with his date of birth.

John Hance apparently told one guest at his cabin that he was born in 1850, for on Sept. 7, 1898, this guest recorded in John Hance's guest book that today was Hance's 48th birthday. On a voting record in 1906, Hance claimed he was 64 years old, meaning he was born in 1842. But two years later on another voting record Hance said he was 60 years old, meaning a birthdate of 1848. In a legal affidavit in 1902, testifying about the work Ralph Cameron had done on the Bright Angel Trail, Hance stated he was 51, meaning a birthdate of 1851. In the 1870 U.S. census Hance listed himself as 29 years old, implying a birthdate of 1841. In the 1880 census Hance was 37 years old, meaning a birthdate of 1843. In the 1900 census Hance said he was 49, and he claimed a birthdate of 1850. In the 1910 census Hance was 64 years old, meaning a birthdate of 1846. John Hance told his brother George that he was born in 1838, and George repeated this for John's obituary in the *Coconino Sun* on January 17, 1919, but George, who was many years younger than John, seemed cautious about this, saying "I have only his statement as to his age." George also said that the day of birth was September 11. A week previously, the newspaper had listed Hance as "about 88 years old," for a birthdate of 1831. But Hance's obituary in the *Arizona Republic* listed him as 84 years old, for a birthdate of 1835. Historian J. Donald Hughes said 1838, and W. C. Barnes in *Arizona Place Names* said 1839.

The truth about John Hance is more interesting than his tales about

himself. When we see where John Hance came from, not just geographically but culturally, then his life as a Grand Canyon prospector and teller of tall tales seems more likely as an outcome.

At least we can take a good aim at where John Hance was born. Hance told someone that he was born at Cowan's Ferry, Tennessee. There never was a town named Cowan's Ferry, but there was indeed a ferry by that name, crossing the French Broad River a few miles east of Dandridge in Jefferson County. This was Appalachian Mountain country: Cowan's Ferry was about 25 miles north of today's Great Smoky Mountain National Park. The French Broad River is one of the major tributaries of the Tennessee River. Cowan's Ferry was established by a prominent local Cowan family that had pioneered Jefferson County in the 1700s and that farmed 700 acres along the French Broad. The ferry was located at the junction of the French Broad River and Indian Creek, and was approached from the east by a road called Cowan's Ferry Road. In 1837, according to the Jefferson County deed book, 50 acres at the junction of Indian Creek and the French Broad River was sold by Martin Bunch to Green Hance, short for Greenberry, the father of John Hance. Martin Bunch was Greenberry's brother-in-law, having married Greenberry's sister Elizabeth. John Hance was probably named for his grandfather John, who had moved his family from South Carolina in 1811, judging from the census fact that his first seven children were born in South Carolina, and the next six, born after 1812, were born in Tennessee. It appears that in the 1830s grandfather John Hance moved from elsewhere in Tennessee to Jefferson County and settled in the Muddy Creek area a few miles west of Indian Creek. The French Broad River was such a defining obstacle that this area was called "South of the River," and its residents "South Americans."

The 1840 census found grandfather John Hance and four of his sons, including Greenberry, living in Jefferson County, and Greenberry now had two sons. Unfortunately the 1840 census did not list the names or ages of children, merely their gender and age range. Greenberry's two male children were listed as only "Under Five." One of these sons should be our John Hance, who was Greenberry's second son. The 1850 census said that John Hance was then ten years old, implying a birthdate of 1840. It's possible that the 1870 census was correct in listing John Hance as 29 years old; if John Hance's birthday was in September and the census was taken slightly after his birthday, the 1870 census would have recorded him as being 29.

Why was John Hance later so mischievous about his age? Hance remained a bachelor, so perhaps a lingering hope of romance prompted him to consistently understate his age. Then again, Hance's public persona as a wise old frontiersman would seem to call for him to exaggerate his age. All we can say for sure is that John Hance grew up in a place where telling mischievous tales was a way of life.

John Hance was the child of a strong river and the strong mountains around it, a child of forests still full of bears. He was the child of a land that was not wanted by most people. The first English settlers of America had settled the rich farmlands along the east coast, and by the time of John Hance's birth, their grandchildren were bypassing the Appalachian Mountains to settle in the Ohio River Valley. The mountains meant dense forests, steep slopes, rocky soil, poor farming, no room for plantations, and bears in the backyard. The mountains were left for Scotsmen, who were accustomed to poor, rocky lands; and Irishmen, who were accustomed to poverty and who would be satisfied to own any land of their own. As the American frontier moved steadily westward, the Appalachians were left as an enclave of frontier culture, where log cabins were the norm and

survival might depend on hunting and fishing. Men knew how to tough it out, to shoot a rifle, to fight and drink and cuss, and to tell tall tales. Storytelling was a long Celtic tradition, but the American frontier exaggerated it further, spawning tales of heroic but stoic frontiersmen taking on the land, the elements, the beasts, and the Indians. Tall tales fit the American mission of heroic conquest of the wilderness (though they also contained cautionary lessons) and they offered entertainment for people in remote hollows who had to entertain themselves with fiddles and moonshine and stories.

As John Hance was growing up in Jefferson County, he would have been hearing tall tales about a man who had grown up there forty years previously and who was now America's Superman of tall tales: Davy Crockett. The Crockett family moved to Jefferson County around 1795, then to the next-door county, where Davy's father ran a tavern. Davy Crockett was good at telling his own tall tales, and his real frontier exploits soon made him a magnet for anyone else who needed to attach a tall tale to someone over-sized. Crockett's Alamo death in 1836 only further inflated the stories about him.

The Appalachian talent for tall tales is still alive today. America's World Series of storytelling events, the National Storytelling Festival, is held in Jonesborough, Tennessee, about 50 miles north of where John Hance was born. Longtime Grand Canyon interpretative ranger Stew Fritts, who has been known to tell a tale or two in his evening programs, is a devotee of the Jonesborough festival, which includes many days and many large tents full of stories. Fritts agrees that John Hance's brand of tall tales has an Appalachian accent; even in the 1940s radio stations didn't penetrate the mountains, and people had to do their own storytelling.

*When John Hance was ready to take tourists down his trail and someone asked nervously if there were any snakes in the canyon, Hance told them of how one time he'd seen 400 snakes at once in the can-*

*yon, but they were moving in a big circle, one snake eating another, until finally there was only one snake left, and then it grabbed its own tail and ate itself, and ever since, there have been no snakes in the canyon.*

Yet even the best stories couldn't substitute for poor lands. In the 1850s Tennessee led the nation in the percent of a state's population that was leaving the state. By far the largest destination for Tennesseans was Missouri. In the 1840s most of the Hances left for Pulaski County, Missouri, the portion of it that in 1857 would be split off to create Phelps County, its county seat the town of Rolla. Pulaski/Phelps County was on the northern edge of the Ozark Mountains.

The 1850 census found Greenberry and at least six of his siblings living in Pulaski County. Greenberry now had a second wife, Rebecca, and five children, the youngest of whom, George Washington Hance, had been born in Tennessee in 1848, indicating that Greenberry had arrived in Missouri after then. Greenberry's brothers were having children at a steady pace, and the dividing line between births in Tennessee and births in Missouri allows us to plot the dates at which the Hance brothers were following one another to Missouri. The children of Andrew Jackson Hance and Samuel Hance were being born in Missouri in 1844; Jonathan's Hance's daughter was born in Missouri in 1845; and Croseph (or Crow) Hance's first Missouri-born child came in 1850. The Hance brothers had moved their parents to Missouri, and their father John died there in 1846. The 1850 census shows their mother, Rachel Hance, living with the family of Jesse Rhea, the next-door neighbor of Greenberry Hance. Only one of Greenberry's brothers, John Jr., remained in Tennessee, and perhaps it was he who planted the thirteen Jefferson County Hance graves that the Tennessee Valley Authority moved to higher ground when it was building dams and lakes in the 1930s.

John Hance apparently told someone that his parents had moved to Missouri in 1852, but this was prob-



ably the honest mistake of a boy who was less than ten years old when they moved.

Several Hance brothers settled in a valley called Kaintuck Hollow (translation: Kentucky), a dozen miles southwest of Rolla. Greenberry Hance settled halfway between his brothers and Rolla, in township 37N, Range 8W, Section 19. I once sought out this location and found a hollow between ridges about 100 feet high, with a creek flowing through it, with a flat bottom full of lush green grass and happy cows. Since the road ended at a private gate, I was unable to investigate if there was any trace of the 1850s Hance homestead.

The Hances' migration to the Ozarks was part of a much larger migration of Appalachian people to the Ozarks. This migration partook of Manifest Destiny, of the dream of a better life in the West, but it was also a fatalistic migration, for the Ozarks held many of the disadvantages of the Appalachians: steep, rocky hills covered with forests, demanding hard labor for poor farmland. At least the Ozarks offered hunting and fishing far better than on the plains. Once again, Appalachian people took a land no one else wanted. In the Ozarks, Appalachian people continued their culture of log cabins and hunting and storytelling and home remedies and moonshine and old-timey music. It would be this Ozarks culture that gave American culture its main images of hillbilly life, partly just because of the 1960s TV show *The Beverly Hillbillies*, which featured Ozarks hillbillies. This was also because of Branson, which by the 1990s had become America's #1 musical destination, drawing more tourists than the shows of Broadway, Nashville, or Las Vegas. Branson started out as a few hillbilly music shows in a small fishing vacation town, and it still revels in its hillbilly identity. The fishing and hunting lifestyle of the Ozarks gave birth to the massive Bass Pro Shop, now a national chain. And it's possible there was a touch of Ozarks storytelling style in the voice of Mark Twain, who was growing up about 120 miles north of where John

Hance was growing up.

The Ozarks also offered a good geological preparation for John Hance's Grand Canyon career. The Hances settled in an area of tall limestone cliffs, with lots of mining. In Phelps County the Ozarks Plateau is dropping off toward the drainage of the Missouri River to the north. The Gasconade River, one of the largest rivers flowing from the Ozarks to the Missouri River, cuts through Phelps County and creates a further complexity of topography, of cliffs and ridges, valleys and hollows. The Rolla Quadrangle, the home of the Hances, contains a total elevation difference of 596 feet, which is about two-thirds of the elevation difference found in the entire state of Illinois or Indiana. These 596 feet include limestone cliffs along the Gasconade River and its main tributaries, the Big Piney River and Little Piney Creek. These cliffs, 200 to 300 feet tall, are impressive by Midwestern standards, and have entrenched the Gasconade River in the way that Southwestern rivers become entrenched in canyons. The Gasconade River takes 300 miles to complete 120 crow-flight miles, and in one section near Phelps County, a boat has to travel fifteen miles to complete two crow miles. But such a trip wouldn't have taken long in the flood of 1879, when the Gasconade River reached 120,000 cfs. John Hance's father Greenberry drowned in a river flood in 1888 (there are no details about this accident), and his body was never recovered.

The drop of the Ozarks Plateau toward the Missouri River brings lots of underground water to the surface, creating lots of springs and sinkholes and caves. Missouri has more caves than any other state, and of Missouri counties, Phelps County has the second highest number of caves. The long string of caves along the northern flank of the Ozarks includes some famous tourist caves, including the Rt. 66 landmark Meramec Caverns.

These caves have inspired some Ozarks-style tall tales, such as the Lost Fiddler. A fiddler had heard about the wonderful acoustics and

echoes inside a cave and went to try it out. A few friends went with him, but remained outside the cave to listen to the echoes coming out. Then the fiddling stopped. When the fiddler didn't emerge from the cave, his friends feared he had taken a wrong turn and they went searching for him. The fiddler tried using his fiddle to summon help, but with all the chambers and passageways and echoes in the cave, his friends got confused and never found him. The fiddler was lost forever.

*John Hance told the story of how he tried to jump across the Grand Canyon on his horse Old Darby. But Darby didn't get enough of a running leap and started to fall into the canyon. Fortunately John Hance had trained Darby well, so a few feet before Darby and Hance hit bottom, Hance yelled out "Whoa!" and Darby stopped, and Hance stepped off Darby onto solid ground. In another version, Darby didn't quite make it across the canyon and Hance landed in a cave below the rim, impossible to climb out of, with nothing to eat. When tourists asked Hance what happened next, he replied that he had starved to death.*

The many caves in the Hances' backyard was also due to the type of rock there, dolomite limestone that erodes into a topography called karst, a Swiss cheese of underground streams, sinkholes, and caves. In Phelps County two layers of dolomite sit atop one another, and the lower layer eroded faster than the layer above, so the boundary between them was left with steep slopes, ledges, and cliffs. These dolomites were deposited in the Cambrian Period, at the same time the Muav Limestone was being deposited in the future Grand Canyon region. Just as with the Grand Canyon, the eras after the Cambrian—the Ordovician, Silurian, and Devonian—were removed by erosion, but the rock layers resume with the Mississippian Period, the era of the Redwall Limestone. But in Phelps County, much of the Mississippian limestone has disappeared.

In the 1820s a group of Indians from Missouri was traveling to Washington D. C. to meet the Great White

Father when they stopped for the night at an Ohio farm. The farmer, Thomas James, noticed the hematite of their face paint and asked where it had come from, and the Indians described a vast deposit of hematite—iron—at a vast spring. Intrigued, James traveled to Missouri and found this iron deposit, a mother lode, in the future Phelps County. In 1826 he opened the Meramec Iron Works, which over the next fifty years produced 300,000 tons of iron. Phelps County iron became the cutting edge of Manifest Destiny, used as plows, guns, kettles, rails, steamboat shafts, and wheels for covered wagons. The only drawback was the mine's location, which required hauling the iron by wagon to the Gasconade River. The solution was a railroad, which arrived in Phelps County in 1860. Given the centrality of mining to the county economy, locals organized the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy in Rolla in 1870, one of very few American colleges devoted primarily to geology and mining. This college still exists, as the engineering branch of the University of Missouri, and it still has a strong emphasis on geology and mining. The campus symbol is a 1/2-scale replica of Stonehenge, made of granite that was cut by students in their high-tech mining lab.

The Hance "brothers were quite interested in mining," according to Ruth Hance Thayer, the granddaughter of George Hance—John's brother and a longtime judge in Camp Verde, Arizona. "The story is told that George...had an old black copy of Dana's *Mineralogy* on which he swore all of his witnesses instead of the Bible—holding the two books of equal importance. John's early trips into and around the Grand Canyon were on mine hunts."<sup>2</sup> John Hance had caught mining fever early on; according to George's obituary of him, John Hance had joined the Pike's Peak gold rush in 1859. In Arizona John would try many other pursuits, but the Arizona mining boom of the 1870s and 80s probably rekindled his interest. The Hances probably never forgot the model of Thomas James,

who had followed a hunch into a wilderness and who ended up living in a mansion there. Few prospectors were willing to take on a landscape like the Grand Canyon, but John Hance's boyhood in a land of big cliffs, big rivers, big mines, and big dares was a better preparation for the canyon than most prospectors ever got.

When the Hances moved to Missouri they joined an equation of conflict that would soon lead to the Civil War. More than most places, in Missouri the Civil War really did pit brother against brother, and it would divide the Hance family.

Missouri was originally settled by southerners, who filled up the rich farmlands along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, bringing slaves and setting up plantations. They were followed by German and Irish immigrants, who had fled European feudalism only to find that feudalism, with lords and manor houses and cruelty, still reigned in Missouri. Missouri's southerners did their best to take Missouri into the Confederacy, and the Germans and Irish resisted, with the result that neighbors were ambushing one another and burning one another's barns. For Appalachian migrants to Missouri, the equation was even more complicated. Appalachia was the one part of the South that was unsympathetic to slavery. This wasn't out of much regard for the slaves, but mainly out of resentment of plantation society. Appalachian farmers, who did their own work, were at a big disadvantage in markets dominated by slave labor, and they felt politically powerless in states dominated by a few dozen wealthy plantation families. These resentments led West Virginia to secede from Virginia and remain in the Union, and they left mountain Tennessee alienated from the Confederacy.

Missouri's Pulaski and Phelps counties were dominated by southerners, and only some of them were Appalachians. The name "Rolla" was a southern-accented phonetic spelling of "Raleigh," the capital of North Carolina. In the Civil War Pulaski County provided 59 soldiers to the Union

army, and about 400 to the Confederate army. Phelps County held more Union supporters, partly because of the influx of Irish workers to build the railroad and work the mines. When the war broke out, Rolla's southerners forced the local, pro-Union newspaper to close, raised a Confederate flag, and formed a militia to patrol town. When a Union army arrived from St. Louis to secure the railhead, Confederates scattered into the countryside and formed guerilla groups to bushwhack Union sympathizers and supply wagons. Since Rolla held the closest railhead to the Ozarks, Rolla became a major staging area for Union operations in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. Huge amounts of supplies moved through Rolla, and in the winter of 1861-62, about 12,000 Union soldiers camped there. They made life very uncomfortable for local Confederates.

The most common story about John Hance's role in the Civil War is that he first joined the Confederate army, was taken prisoner, and then joined the Union army. However, John Hance's niece Francis Hance Rose (George's daughter), in a 1948 letter to Lon Garrison, Assistant Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, who was writing an *Arizona Highways* article about Hance, insisted that John Hance couldn't have been in the Confederate army. Frances Hance Rose said that her father George was an ardent abolitionist, and she would have heard if there had been any Confederates in the family.

It seems that George Hance too was good at keeping secrets.

John Hance's military record shows that he enlisted in the Confederate army on August 1, 1862, in Oregon County, Missouri, which was on the Arkansas border, a safer location than Rolla at which to organize Confederate troops. John Hance joined Company D of the 10th Regiment of Missouri Infantry, which was a reorganization of several other regiments.

A few days after John Hance enlisted, his 17-year-old brother Andrew Jackson Hance enlisted in the Confederate 8th Infantry, also mustering



in Oregon County. Andrew Jackson Hance's military activities were mentioned several times in the diary of his commanding officer, Eathan Allen Pinnell.<sup>3</sup> Andrew campaigned in Arkansas, got sick a couple of times, was assigned to a pontoon bridge crew in Little Rock, then to a steamboat on the Red River in Louisiana, where he surrendered in May of 1865.

Two of John Hance's uncles, Jonathan and Johnson, who were twins and who seemed to think alike too, also joined the Confederate army. Johnson Hance was a Kaintuck Hollow neighbor of his brothers Samuel and Crow Hance, but both of them sent sons into the Union army: Samuel's son Joseph and Crow's son Harrison. Also joining the Union army was a Green Hance, who presumably was another of Samuel Hance's sons, not John Hance's father Greenberry. (Because the Hance brothers began naming their sons for one another, the same names proliferated, leaving things confusing even for Hance family genealogists. Even today there's a Greenberry Hance in the Rolla area).

George Hance (John's brother) joined the Union army and served in the Quartermaster Corps, hauling supplies by wagon. This was a logical career for someone from Rolla, with its huge amounts of supplies going from the railroad onto wagons and then hundreds of miles to the front. It was this job that, after the war, would take George and John Hance to Arizona. This job was also the beginning of George Hance's long friendship with Lorenzo Hickok (brother of Wild Bill Hickok), who served as a Union wagon master based out of Rolla. When the war ended and shipping dried up, Lorenzo tried to open a saloon in Rolla, but this didn't last long, and soon Lorenzo was commanding army wagons in Kansas, alongside George and John Hance.

John Hance's 10th Regiment was organized by W. O. Coleman, a Rolla merchant who earlier that year was leading guerilla attacks against Union wagon trains. This raises the possibility that John Hance might have attacked wagon trains driven

by George Hance, but there is no indication that this happened. There is nothing to support the suggestion of Lon Garrison in his June, 1949, *Arizona Highways* article about John Hance that Hance was associated with William Quantrill, the bloodiest of Missouri Confederate guerrillas.

We do know that John Hance fought in the battle of Helena, Arkansas, a disaster for the Confederates and especially for the 10th Regiment, which entered the battle with 525 men and emerged with 236 men. Most of those losses were men who were captured, and this included John Hance.

Helena was an important Mississippi River port town, and an important link in the Union army's plan to take control of the Mississippi and split the Confederacy. In February of 1863 Union General Benjamin Prentiss took command of Helena and began fortifying it with heavy artillery. Prentiss was the hero of the battle of Shiloh, where in the Hornet's Nest, with the help of an artillery commander named John Wesley Powell, he had held off the Confederate attack long enough to bring a Union victory. Now Prentiss had 4,129 soldiers to hold off a July 4 attack by 7,645 Confederates, who sought to retake Helena and break the Union pressure on Vicksburg to the south. But the Confederate attack was poorly planned and poorly coordinated. John Hance's regiment, along with seven other regiments, was under the command of General Sterling Price, who failed to start his attack from the planned location or time. Nevertheless, Price's men managed to seize their target, Union Battery C on Graveyard Hill, through a brave charge against heavy artillery and rifle fire. Even the Union officers were impressed, one of them calling the charge "a splendid spectacle," and General Prentiss credited "a courage and desperation rarely equaled." Yet Price's thinned ranks then foolishly tried to charge the neighboring Union battery, and they were quickly beaten back. A Union counterattack soon recaptured Graveyard Hill, and captured about 350 Confederates there, a majority of them from the 10th Mis-

souri Infantry, presumably including John Hance.

John Hance spent the rest of the war in prison. He was sent up the Mississippi River to Alton, Illinois, where an abandoned Illinois state prison had been reopened as an army prison. This prison, built in 1833, had been abandoned because it was deemed unfit for human habitation. In 1846 prison reformer Dorothea Dix had visited the Alton prison and denounced it as filthy, with its mere five hospital beds located in a basement that flooded during rains. The prison had only 236 cells, but the Union army now stuffed them with up to 5,000 prisoners. Sanitation and ventilation were terrible; there were no bathing facilities; and smallpox swept through the prison and killed over a thousand prisoners. For two weeks in December, 1863, and for a week in January, 1864, John Hance was listed as being in the prison hospital, with no reason given.

On February 29, 1864, John Hance was transferred to Fort Delaware, an old, moated, stone fortress on a 75-acre island in the Delaware River, now a prison. Ft. Delaware prison began as a temporary holding station for prisoners who were soon exchanged for Union prisoners, but this changed with the battle of Gettysburg, when about 10,000 prisoners from it arrived at Ft. Delaware. For the next two years Ft. Delaware's prisoner population would range between 5,000 and 10,000, and it peaked at 16,000, making Ft. Delaware the largest city in Delaware. Severe overcrowding, collapsing barracks, poor sanitation, foul air, insufficient food, disease, and a harried guard force of only 300 men, made Ft. Delaware a notorious hellhole, dreaded by Confederate soldiers, branded by some historians as "the Andersonville of the North." An average of three prisoners died there every day, for a total of 2,460 deaths.

By the time John Hance arrived at Ft. Delaware, the prisoner exchange system had broken down, so Hance was there for the rest of the war, over a year. We catch a glimpse of Hance's arrival in the diary of a Yankee guard,

A. J. Hamilton, who noted for March 4, 1864: "We have been receiving a new installment of Rebels and today receive the last of 1,700."<sup>4</sup> For November 22, Hamilton reported: "The weather is very cold, everything frozen up tight as a brick, we nearly freeze when in quarters."<sup>5</sup> November 22 was also the day that John Hance was admitted to the prison hospital, and he was not discharged until February 23, three months later. There is no record of Hance's illness. Waves of smallpox, malaria, scurvy, intestinal disorders, and other illnesses meant that most prisoners who entered that hospital never emerged alive.

A. J. Hamilton's diary reveals his impatience with the Confederates. On July 10, 1863, looking at newly arrived Gettysburg prisoners, he wrote of them: "Many of them admit they are sick of war and wish peace was restored on any terms. Others are determined to fight it out to the bitter end and apparently have no doubt of their success. Poor, deluded wretches. Lousy, filthy, exhausted and almost naked. What can you gain?"<sup>6</sup> Confederates could gain their freedom by taking a loyalty oath to the Union, but few did. John Hance didn't. The high frustration level inside Ft. Delaware led to fights, escape attempts, and guard cruelty.

In spite of the harsh conditions in prison, it appears that John Hance's mischievous sense of humor was alive and well. The only glimpse we get of Hance in prison is the periodic Roll of Prisoners, which is normally impersonal, but with his roll calls, Hance continued varying his name. He is John Hantz, or John Hans, or John Hands, or John Hants, or John Hance. While these could have been clerical errors, these variations sound so much like Hance's later games with his birthdate that it's plausible Hance was having some fun with his captors.

On April 22, 1865, with the war essentially over, John Hance was part of a prisoner exchange. He was shipped to New Orleans, and then, on May 2, sent up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red River, where his military

record ends.

John Hance ended the war as he began it: as a private. His later use of the name "Captain" was apparently just a nickname. The honorary term "Captain" was often used by mountain men, especially ones who had served as guides for the U. S. army or exploratory expeditions.

And what of the claim of John Hance's niece, Frances Hance Rose, that John couldn't possibly have been a Confederate? In researching this article I communicated with Rose's grandson, Mike Mauer, and he assumes that Rose, along with other Hances, was merely engaging in wishful thinking: they simply didn't want the most famous Hance to be a Johnny Reb. But John's brother George Hance had plainly spelled out John's true military record in his 1919 obituary in the *Coconino Sun*. John Hance's reticence about his record is understandable. For starters, he was probably ready to bury his horrible memories. In a family whose youngsters, like Frances, were eager to admire their Hance war heroes, there would be little welcome for a traitor who had fought against Frances's father. When John Hance went to work driving wagons for the army after the war, he was surrounded by Union veterans. In the early years of Grand Canyon tourism, most tourists came from northern states, and some were Union army veterans, and John Hance's popularity depended on his carefully cultivated persona as an American frontier hero.

It was nearly twenty years between the end of the Civil War and John Hance's arrival at the Grand Canyon, which is usually dated at 1883, although there is some uncertainty about this too. John Hance's life in those years is sketchy. But the key to it was George Hance's job as an army wagon master. At the end of the war George Hance was transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. George Hance doesn't mention it in his autobiographical notes, but this transfer may have been owed to his friendship with Lorenzo Hickok. In her letter to Lon Garrison, Frances

Hance Rose said that George and Hance started working for Lorenzo Hickok out of Fort Leavenworth. Certainly George and Lorenzo had become good friends. By one account, it was George Hance who connected the name "Wild Bill" to Lorenzo's brother. In *Wild Bill Hickok: The Man and His Myth*, Joseph G. Rosa wrote: "According to legend, James Butler Hickok won the name Wild Bill in 1862, when he stopped the lynching of a bartender at Independence, Missouri. The source of this story is George W. Hance, a fellow wagon master and family friend. He served during the Civil War in this capacity, sometimes with Lorenzo Hickok, and first met both brothers at Rolla, Missouri. Tradition asserts that a woman in the crowd yelled 'My God, ain't he wild!' and Wild Bill was born."<sup>7</sup> However, in an article George Hance wrote about Wild Bill Hickok for the Topeka Mail and Breeze on December 20, 1901, he made no mention of any role in the naming of Wild Bill, and George Hance's great-grandson Mike Mauer had never heard this story.

In September of 1865 George Hance, and probably John, joined an expedition of 186 mule teams heading from Ft. Leavenworth to establish and provision army forts across Kansas, as far as Hays. After this, George Hance became a dispatch rider based at Camp Riley, carrying messages to General George A. Custer, who was in charge of suppressing Indian troubles in western Kansas. In 1867 George Hance was appointed assistant wagon master on an expedition to Ft. Union in New Mexico. By June of 1868 George and John were at Ft. Sumner, New Mexico, where they helped transport the Navajos back home after their disastrous Long Walk exile. Most of the Navajos had to walk home, in a line that stretched ten miles, but the army provided 56 wagons to carry the aged and infirm, as well as supplies. As soon as he was done with this job and had returned to Ft. Union, George resigned from the army and headed back to Arizona, along with John, their younger brother Jim, and over a dozen oth-

ers. They arrived in Prescott in at the start of December, 1868. But George soon reconnected with the army. He and John and Jim moved to Camp Verde, where George went to work at the army sutler's store, and with their bull team they began taking contracts to haul wood and hay to the fort. John Hance supervised Mexican workers at cutting hay. The Hances also helped build roads and ditches. When the army decided to remove the Apaches from the Verde Valley to the San Carlos Reservation, the Hances were hired to help transport the aged and infirm. In John's obituary, George Hance said: "He was here in early Indian times and was slightly wounded skin deep on one side in the center of ribs under one arm, on the other about same depth of wound on opposite arm and may have been in other fights in other parts of Arizona or New Mexico, as he was on the go or run-about in early days."<sup>8</sup> John Hance would add "Apache fighter" to his public persona, but this could have been simply a brawl during the Apache's eviction.

John Hance seems to have caught the bug for Wild West adventure, but George Hance settled down and became a leading citizen of the Camp Verde area. In 1877 George went into the tourist business. He had bought a ranch on the south rim of the Verde Valley, and since it was on the busy road between Camp Verde and Prescott, he began offering lodging and meals. Arizona state historian Sharlot Hall paid tribute to George's hospitality in her obituary of George in 1932: "For many years he owned the beautiful Cienega Ranch between Camp Verde and Prescott and not only farmed and ran cattle but operated a road station popular with all travelers on that route. It was not an unusual sight to see half a dozen old time freight outfits, Army ambulances, and the mail and passenger buckboard all camped under the trees of the Cienega Ranch waiting for one of the fine dinners served by Mrs. Hance and her helpers."<sup>9</sup> We don't know if John Hance ever worked in George's tourist operation, but he surely was

aware of how popular it was, and it probably prepared him to set up a similar operation on the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

Little is known about Jim Hance, except that he settled in Flagstaff for many years, then moved back to Missouri. Hance family members said that both George and Jim possessed a sense of humor similar to John's. One story about Jim has survived, and it seems pure Hance. While living in Flagstaff, Jim bought a cow, only to discover that the cow refused to be milked by a man, only by a woman. But Jim found he could fool the cow by dressing in women's clothing. One time for a Flagstaff parade, Jim paraded in a dress, and he won the award for best costume.

John Hance pursued various activities. In the 1870s he was running his own bull team. George's granddaughter Ruth Hance Thayer said that John also tried mining. Ruth also reported: "In the sutler's Ledger Book at Fort Verde on November 10, 1876, John Hance derived the handsome sum of two hundred thirty dollars (\$230.00) for two mares and a colt. No doubt this entire sum was applied to his account, for at that time he and John Ricketts were in some sort of venture together and had purchased many supplies."<sup>10</sup> In 1877 the Yavapai County deed book shows John Hance buying 160 acres, but borrowing a thousand dollars from George to do so. In 1881 John Hance was driving a stagecoach, and on May 10 he was involved in a dramatic robbery. This account comes from a January 1967 article in *True West* magazine, although the detailed dialogue between Hance and the robbers should leave readers wondering how many other liberties its author took with the story.

John Hance was driving the stagecoach between Canyon Diablo, where railroad construction had stopped while a bridge was being built, and Flagstaff. This day his freight included only mail sacks, not the usual strong boxes for valuables. As the stagecoach was climbing the slopes near Flagstaff, its horses winded and moving slowly, five riders surround-

ed it, guns drawn, not wearing masks. The robbers didn't bother to rob the passengers but went straight for the mail sacks. Only when Hance reached Flagstaff did he discover that Wells Fargo had been trying to fool outlaws by hiding \$125,000 in gold and silver in those mail sacks. A posse failed to find the robbers. Wells Fargo enlisted the help of the army, whose Indian scouts picked up the robber's trail and followed them to Veit Spring, near today's Snowbowl Road. The soldiers caught the robbers there, shot it out, and killed all five. The next day John Hance was brought there to identify them as the robbers. Their loot wasn't found. Flagstaff residents searched for it for decades, with dowsing sticks and army surplus mine detectors, but never found it. The lost treasure gave rise to its share of legends of treasure maps, mysterious strangers, and secret markings on trees and boulders. Then there's the story of "Short Jimmy" McGuire, who was usually broke but who one day in 1913 walked into a Flagstaff bar, plunked down a \$50 gold piece to buy drinks for everyone, announced he'd found the treasure—he wasn't saying where—and then he promptly had a heart attack and died, his pockets full of gold coins.

It was buried treasure of a different sort that lured John Hance to the Grand Canyon to go prospecting. He did find a rich asbestos lode, but clearly John Hance also fell under the canyon's romantic spell.

Considering that John Hance is still a Grand Canyon legend a century after his death, it's surprising that the Hances back in Missouri have completely forgotten him. In researching this article I contacted the 30 Hance families in the Rolla-area phone book, and they placed me in touch with more far-flung Hances, some of whom had done family genealogy research, but none of them had heard of John Hance. I found a Hance to act as my scout as the annual Hance family reunion in the area, but she could find no trace of John Hance. It seems that the Arizona Hances simply lost touch with the Missouri Hances. On January 19, 1906, the St. James (Missouri)



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Journal mentioned: "James Hance, formerly a resident of this locality, returned to his home in Arizona Tuesday. This is Mr. Hance's first visit here in twenty-five years." Though James (Jim) Hance later moved back to Missouri, he seems to have settled near St. Louis, not among the old Hance families, and he never had any children. George Hance visited Missouri in 1912, the first time in nearly fifty years. As far as we know, John Hance never returned home. But the Missouri Hances were delighted to learn from me that, somehow, their family history and places and spirit had spawned a man who was the right match for the spirit of the Grand Canyon.

John Hance is still playing games with us, for on his tombstone it says he was 80 years old, meaning a birthdate of 1838, a date probably derived from George's obituary of John.

I never did discover how John Hance had lost the tip of his index finger, so perhaps it was also true that "I plum wore it off, pointing out the

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scenery to visitors."

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- 7 Joseph G. Rosa, *Wild Bill Hickok: The Man and his Myth* (Lawrence, Ks: University Press of Kansas, 1996).
- 8 *Coconino Sun*, January 17, 1919.
- 9 *The Courier*, August 2, 1932.
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