

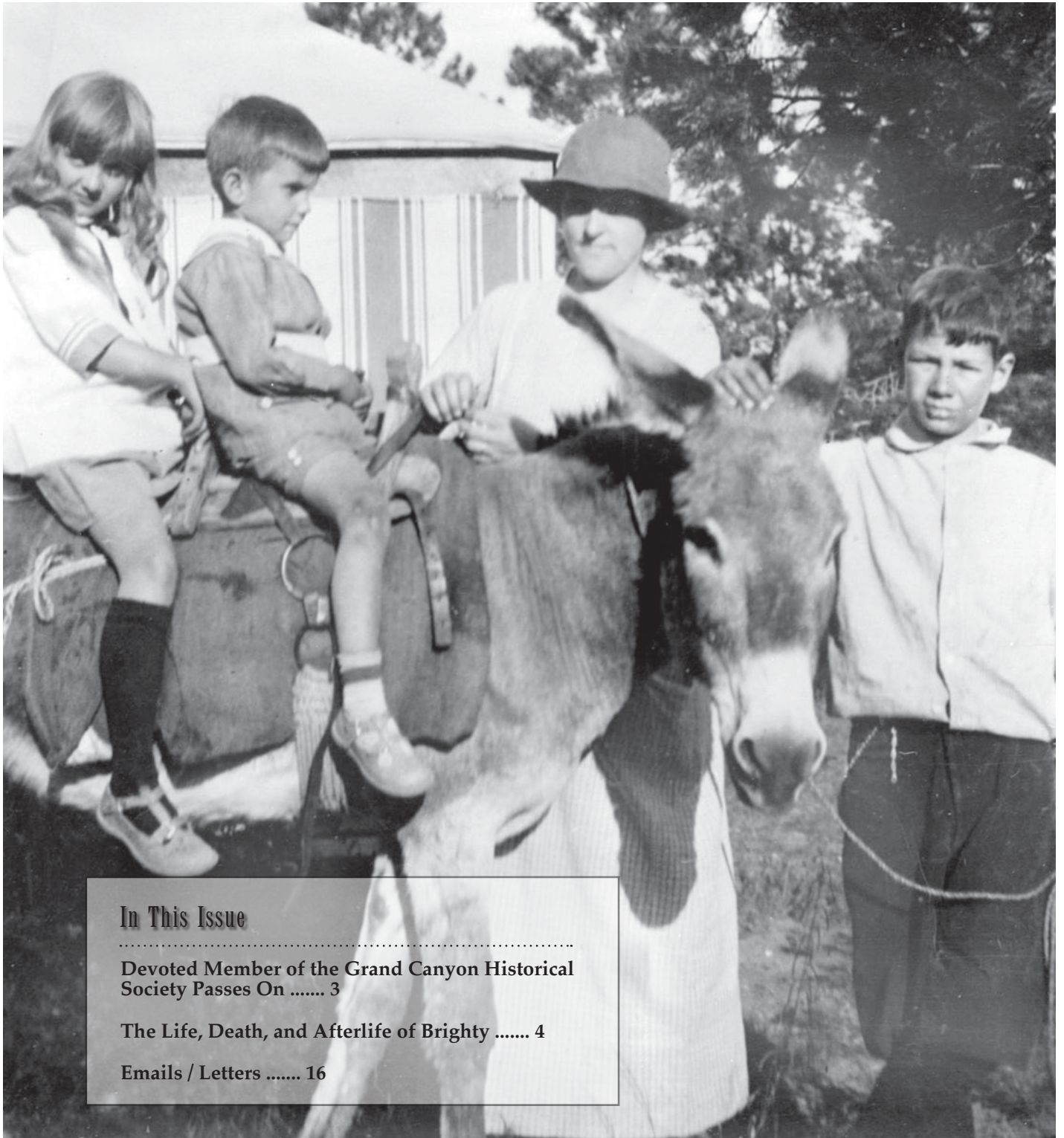
# The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

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Summer 2012



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# President's Letter

This year has been an exciting one for history buffs as the whole state celebrates the centennial of Arizona's statehood. At the Grand Canyon, it is also the hundredth anniversary of the Kolb brothers' historic river trip which society member and noted author Brad Dimock re-enacted in a replica of the *Edith*. Later society members Tom Martin, Hazel Clark, and Dave and Pam Mortenson followed with an entire flotilla of historic replica boats (see their website at [www.historicriverboatsafloat.org](http://www.historicriverboatsafloat.org)). Tom (who is the Society's Secretary) also came out with an excellent new book (*Big Water, Little Boats*) which tells the stories behind the original boats that inspired their trip. And of course, the year started off with the exciting and informative third Grand Canyon History Symposium at the South Rim.

Although the highly successful symposium is over, a group of dedicated volunteers led by Richard Quartaroli have been hard at work on the proceedings publication. The publication is essential to ensure that the wide range of research compiled for the symposium is available to researchers for years to come. With over thirty papers to compile, review, and format, it is a significant task. But the team is on track to have the publication ready by the end of the year (they would make great Christmas presents!). A special thanks to all the symposium sponsors whose support have made the publication possible.

This is the time of year when we start looking for new volunteers to serve on the Grand Canyon Historical Society board of directors. Elected members serve for three-year terms. Aside from filling the half-dozen official positions, board members help plan outings and events, vote for award and scholarship recipients, and provide input on Society-related questions and direction. We have one official meeting in Flagstaff in the fall, but most other society business is done informally via phone and email. The work load and time obligation is usually fairly light and it is a great way to support the Society and work with other canyon enthusiasts. You don't have to live near the canyon and the only requirements are a passion for canyon history and a few hours a month. If you are interested in running for a position on the board (or know somebody who would be), please contact me for more information ([president@grandcanyonhistory.org](mailto:president@grandcanyonhistory.org)).

Hope to see you at the picnic!

Erik Berg  
GCHS President

COVER: Brighty the Burro at Wylie Way Camp with Bob McKee and unidentified woman. Circa 1918. Grand Canyon National Park #05271

*The Ol' Pioneer* submission deadlines are going to be roughly January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 and we will publish either three or four issues a year, depending on content volume.

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The Historical Society was established in July 1984 as a non-profit corporation to develop and promote appreciation, understanding 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 \$25 are payable on the 1st of January each year, and mailed to the GCHS Treasurer, PO Box 31405 Flagstaff, AZ 86003-1405. *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.

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Submissions to *The Bulletin* should be sent to Karen Greig, [kgreig@yahoo.com](mailto:kgreig@yahoo.com)

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# Devoted Member of the Grand Canyon Historical Society Passes On

by Nancy Green

One of our loyal members happened to have four black paws and a big nose. Keetna, dog belonging to Keith & Nancy Green, deliberately walked off into the Kaibab National Forest adjacent to the Greens' house on June 16, 2012. She was 14 and ailing, but had enough gumption to choose her own ending on her own terms. She started her life as a Grand Canyon pound puppy, abandoned at the then Babbitts Store. She was a little ball of black fluff at that time. She managed to get her picture in *The Bulletin* and *The Ol' Pioneer* often, so you may recall a happy Black Lab sniffing around on many of the outings.

Her first outing was to Rock Art Ranch in September of 2001. As we all tried to make sense of 9/11, Keetna was happily splashing in Chevelon Creek, looking at us looking at the petroglyphs. A snowy and cold winter day found us all peering at the recently restored original Grand Canyon Post Office building, while Keetna happily made doggie angels in the snow banks. She loved our picnics at Shoshone Point. The most memorable one was when she lunged at the table loaded with wonderful smelling food, bumped into Harvey Butchart, who was none too steady at that time, nearly dumping Harvey nose first into a German chocolate cake. Luckily, Nancy was able to steady both Keetna and Harvey with no harm done. In August of 2002, we all sweltered in the heat listening to Maurice Castagne's excellent presentation about the Grand Canyon Orphan Mine at Maricopa Point. At times Maurice's talk was drowned out by Keetna's panting.

Keetna's favorite outings included any of the ones involving camping. She attended numerous ones at the historical ranger station at Jacob Lake. Two memorable events occurred at

these. First, she narrowly missed getting swatted by the tail of a huge, waddling porcupine. The other event was a truly magnificent thunderclap right over our heads, which made Keetna almost jump out of her skin, eyes as big as saucers.

Led by Al Richmond, we explored the Anita Mine area in October of 2003. Keetna had lots of new places to sniff on that one. Lee's Ferry with the beach by the Paria has long been a favorite haunt for many dogs, including Keetna. So it was a pleasure to head up that way for a tour of the Lonely Dell with Mike Coltrin in April of 2005. Keetna always enjoyed splashing along the shore of that chilly Colorado. In fact, any outing involving water was high on her list of happy times. On the North Rim in August of 2005, we visited the newly refurbished Three Lakes Cabin, so named because of the nearby lakes. Keetna didn't really seem that interested in the finer points of historic cabin restoration as she tore off down the hill to noisily splash into the sweet lake surrounded by cattails and high grasses. That glazed, happy look came over her eyes as she sank into the water and dog-paddled around. Then she enthusiastically bounded out of the water to find a hapless human to stand by while she shook off the water droplets.

While geology was not Keetna's main interest, she thoroughly enjoyed traipsing around Toroweap and Mt. Trumbell with George Billingsley in September of 2007. She was disappointed that the Colorado River seemed a lot further down to Lava Falls than it does from the Paria Riffle. Those old buildings at the Red Butte Airport were thoroughly sniffed by Keetna in August of 2008 when Steve Owen and other Society members organized a talk there.

Keetna attended numerous Guide Training Seminars up at the Hatch warehouse every year in March. She

was amazed at how many other dogs attended that one, as she was so used to being the only dog at most Society events. In July of 2009 Keetna enjoyed the campout at Pasture Wash Ranger Station, where John Azar was organizing a youth volunteer group to help with the restoration. The coyotes howling that night kept Keetna alert at our tent door, peering out the screen into the darkness.

Her last outing was in House Rock Valley at the Kane Ranch in October of 2010. We snagged one of the tent platforms, and had a magnificent night in the light of the full moon filling up the entire space between the Vermillion Cliffs, Echo Cliffs and the Kaibab Plateau. Cold, crisp autumn air spilled over the cliffs from the North Rim, making us all shiver, but too spell-bound by the beauty to really be bothered by it.

Of course, we didn't know that would be her last outing. By 2011, Keetna had cataracts, was mostly deaf, and suffered from doggie Alzheimers so she couldn't travel anymore. That's why we were amazed when she summoned up the remnants of her dear, sweet personality and knew that it was her time to go. I envision her soaring over a huge log fall out by Shoshone Point, happy, free and loving her life living by the Grand Canyon.



Keetna and Keith at Petrified Forest.

# The Life, Death, and Afterlife of Brighty

by Don Iago

Starting in 1953, with the publication of Marguerite Henry's novel *Brighty of the Grand Canyon*, the rangers at Grand Canyon National Park have received frequent letters and questions asking about Brighty. Was there really a Brighty? How much of the novel was true? What happened to Brighty after the novel ends?

There was indeed a real Brighty. He was more real than much of the novel and the movie made from it. Brighty fully deserved to be turned into an enduring symbol of the wild grandeur of the canyon. His real story also contained many of the elements of a Wild West novel, especially his death, a story Marguerite Henry didn't dare tell. For many years the park gave its letters about Brighty to longtime park librarian Louise Hinchliffe for her to answer, and she too didn't have the heart to tell children the full truth, so she said: "...during one of the cold North Rim winters, when he was captured by horsethieves, he froze to death."<sup>1</sup>

Here's the real story of Brighty's life and death, and the stories of how Brighty got turned into a novel, a movie, and a controversial statue.

Most of what we know about Brighty comes from the writings of Thomas McKee, who, with his wife Elizabeth, managed the first tourist facility on the North Rim, starting in 1917. Elizabeth Wylie McKee's father, William Wylie, had opened the first tourist camp in Yellowstone National Park in 1893. When the Union Pacific Railroad reached southern Utah and wanted to set up tourist facilities at Zion and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, it turned to William Wylie. Wylie's camps consisted of tent cabins, with wooden floors and roofs but canvas walls. Wylie, a former teacher and director of public schools in Montana, also offered campfire entertainment and interpretative pro-

grams, which may have influenced the National Park Service's tradition of ranger programs. William Wylie himself ran the camp at Zion, and he sent Elizabeth and her husband to the North Rim. Elizabeth had studied astronomy at Wellesley College, and upon graduation she applied for a job at California's Lick Observatory, the leading observatory of the time. The director of Lick Observatory admitted that Elizabeth was just as qualified as the male applicants, but he turned her down, merely because she was a woman. Elizabeth and Thomas remained on the North Rim for a decade, until the Union Pacific, now convinced of the value of building an expensive lodge there, sent them packing.

In the wintertime the McKees lived in southern California, and Thomas, who had worked as an editor before his tourism career, wrote articles for magazines and radio broadcasts. He wrote an article about Brighty that got published in *Sunset* magazine in August 1922. Thirty years later Marguerite Henry discovered this article and it inspired her to write her novel.

When the McKees arrived at the canyon, Brighty had been living there for almost three decades, as nearly

as Thomas McKee could figure out from the very few people who had encountered Brighty. Thomas heard a story that indicates that Brighty was first seen in the canyon in 1890. The previous year, on the first attempted Colorado River expedition since John Wesley Powell's expeditions, Frank Brown, a railroad company president from Denver, had drowned only two dozen miles into the Grand Canyon. Frank Brown's wife refused to give up hope that Frank might still be alive at the bottom of the canyon. She sent a plea to John Fuller, a herdsman who lived on the North Rim at the top of Bright Angel Canyon, asking him to search for Frank. John Fuller knew the Colorado River and the canyon well enough to know that Mrs. Brown's plea was a foolish fantasy. It was extremely unlikely that Fuller would even find Frank Brown's body, which could have washed up anywhere—or nowhere—in the sixty miles between where Brown disappeared and where Fuller could reach the river at the mouth of Bright Angel Creek. Still, unlikely things did happen in the canyon, and Fuller hated to refuse a desperate widow's plea. With his friend Harry MacDonald, Fuller headed into the canyon.



Wylie Way Camp cabins near Bright Angel Point on the North Rim, 1916–1927. Grand Canyon National Park #06822.



Uncle Jim Owens with Brighty the Burro. Circa 1910 Grand Canyon Nation Park #05270.

At that time the route from the North Rim was a rough deer trail. Fuller and MacDonald couldn't get their pack horses down the trail and had to proceed on foot. When they got to the junction of Bright Angel Creek and Phantom Creek, about a mile from the Colorado River, they were amazed to find a little tent there, with a grey burro standing beside it. There was no one else around. Fuller and MacDonald spent four days searching the river shore for as far as they could hike or see with binoculars. Giving up and heading back up the trail, they stopped again at the tent, and still no one was there but the burro.

This time Fuller and MacDonald gave the camp a closer inspection.

They found two cots inside, and two nearly-new Winchester rifles, and an Elgin gold watch that had run down from not being wound. A campfire and Dutch oven, with food still inside, looked like they hadn't been used in about a week. Fuller and MacDonald, experienced trackers, followed the skimpy tracks of two men and two horses to the river, where the tracks disappeared. Fuller and MacDonald decided that the two men had come down from the South Rim and were trying to go back up for supplies, but they had misjudged the river's current and been swept to their deaths. In their tent was a written receipt for supplies from Babbitt's store in Flagstaff, and a letter from the fiancé of one of the men, warning him against

his often reckless behavior. Later, Fuller heard about two men with a burro who, soon before Fuller's trip into the canyon, had passed through Flagstaff and into the canyon. No one knew who these men were, and no one ever heard from them again.<sup>2</sup>

The burro finally gave up waiting for the two men to return, and began roaming Bright Angel Creek and Canyon, for which he was named. Brighty figured out that he could escape the summer heat by heading up to the North Rim, where lush meadows offered much better food. When the snows started on the rim, he headed back into the canyon. He repeated this cycle for over thirty years.

On the North Rim Brighty liked to hang out near the cabin of "Uncle"



Wylie Way Camp staff with the McKee family and Brighty the Burro. July 1918. Grand Canyon National Park #05427

Jim Owens, the Forest Service game warden, famous for killing hundreds of North Rim mountain lions.<sup>3</sup> In his diary, McKee notes that Owens first met Brighty at a surveyor's camp, though he gives no details. Brighty enjoyed humans for their company—and their pancakes. Occasionally hunters showed up and tried to capture Brighty for use as a pack animal, but Brighty usually got away. When the McKees and the tourists showed up, Brighty usually hung out with them. Uncle Jim and the McKees honored Brighty's free spirit by letting him come and go as he wished, never trying to tie him up. Marguerite Henry captured the spirit of their friendship when she portrayed Uncle Jim and Brighty together: "There was

no visible tie rope between the man and the burro, but it was there all the same—a tie rope of such stuff as could never thin out and break apart."<sup>4</sup>

Brighty also enjoyed a friendship with the McKee's son Bob, who was seven years old when the McKees first arrived at the canyon. Brighty helped Bob haul water for the camp. The camp's only water source was a spring about 200 steep feet below the rim, about half a mile from the camp. In the morning Bob went to the kitchen door and yelled: "Pancakes, Brighty!" and Brighty, who usually bedded down nearby, almost always showed up. Bob led Brighty up and down to the spring several times a day, and at the end of each trip Brighty got some pancakes leftover

from breakfast. Brighty wore a pack-saddle that held two 10-gallon metal cans, made for Model-T Ford gas tanks; when full, the tanks weighted close to 200 pounds. Decades later, Bob recalled:

Brighty took his own sweet time, and would stop when he was winded. Since Brighty was well along in years, we understood, and never pushed him. When he had rested, he would start up the trail on his own. Many times, I went on ahead, knowing that the burro would come right up to the unloading point by himself as soon as he was ready."<sup>5</sup>

In a 1954 letter to Marguerite Henry, Thomas McKee recalled:

The mischievous girls, waitresses and maids, put up on this tree a sign: "Wylie Water Works. Power Plant, Brighty; General Manager, Bob." A girl one day asked: "Bob, which is the boss of this shebang, you or Brighty?" Reply: "Neither. We are pardners." They used to tease Bob in fashion like this: One to another in Bob's hearing: "I do believe that Bob and Brighty are together so much that they are beginning to look alike." Retort: "I'll lend him to you for a while if you think it will improve your looks." O, we used to laugh a lot in those dear dead days!<sup>6</sup>

Brighty also enjoyed giving rides to the smaller children in the camp. Thomas McKee: "But when the larger boys mount him and demand too much either in speed or endurance he will promptly kick up his heels and pitch them off. He can be coaxed but not driven, and the limits of the service he renders are set by himself."<sup>7</sup>

In the winter of 1920-21, when Brighty was at the canyon bottom, a construction crew arrived and built the first footbridge across the Colorado River. Brighty took a keen interest in their activities:

He fraternized with the men of the crew and at times lent his back to aid in the enterprise.

When the structure was completed the question arose as to who should be permitted to make the first official crossing. By acclamation and by the consent of the authorities the honor was bestowed upon Brighty as the oldest and most distinguished inhabitant of the place.<sup>8</sup>

But the bridge would open up Brighty's winter refuge, open it to trouble. The next winter a man came down from the South Rim, crossed the bridge, and captured Brighty. This man was running from the law. In southern Arizona he had stolen \$6,000 in Liberty Bonds from the home of an elderly man. No one had noticed the theft right away, so the thief got a good head start. The thief led Brighty up the trail to the North Rim, though it was now winter and the snows on the rim were deep.

It seems that the thief had already planned his escape route out of Arizona. The previous July he had arrived at the canyon from the north and gone down the trail and crossed the new footbridge. On his way to the canyon he had stopped at the log-cabin headquarters of the Bar Z Ranch, located at today's Kaibab Lodge. He had eaten dinner with the cowboys and stayed the night, and he asked a lot of questions about the cabin. Did anyone live there in the winter? No. Was any food left there over the winter? Some. Later on, the cowboys recalled that the man had given the cabin a close inspection before he left in the morning.

From the cabin the man walked the seventeen miles to the rim, and there he encountered another camp of cowboys, eating lunch. The man stopped and talked with them, and by chance Brighty walked up for a snack. The man asked about Brighty and was told that Brighty always spent the winters along Bright Angel Creek, and that Brighty was so friendly that anyone could walk right up to him.

That December the thief showed up at the South Rim, carrying a heavy pack. "By mere chance," wrote Thomas McKee in an unpublished



Brighty the Burro with Bob McKee. Brighty has tanks used to carry water from Cliff Dweller Sprint to Wylie Way Camp on the North Rim. 1918. Grand Canyon National Park #05272.

article about Brighty's death, from which this account is taken, "a ranger saw him going down into the Canyon by way of an old, abandoned trail far to the westward from all habitations. The ranger at a distance inspected the fellow through field-glasses and... supposed him to be one of those inveterate prospectors who haunt the warm Canyon in winter."<sup>9</sup> The thief was trying to avoid the busier trails; when he got to the Tonto Plateau he headed east along it until he reached the Bright Angel Trail and descended it to the footbridge. Across the river, he found Brighty. A pack animal and trail breaker might come in handy. The thief was planning to spend the winter in the Bar Z cabin. He may not have realized that the cabin was at about 9,000 feet, and winters there were very hard.

The winter of 1921-22 was unusually hard, with constant snowstorms. The trail out of the canyon was treacherous, and the seventeen miles from the rim to the Bar Z cabin took two days. In the snow and fog the thief couldn't be sure of the direction to the cabin. Thinking he must be near, and thinking he would lighten his load, he hung his pack, with his food and gun and wool blankets, on a tree limb, planning to return for it soon. When he found the cabin it was near nightfall, too late to return for his pack. In the morning he found that the snow had erased his footprints, and he could not find his pack. He had been counting on his gun to supply him with meat, if only squirrels. In the weeks to come he continued searching for his pack, but never found it. In the cabin the thief found that the only food was about ten pounds each of beans and flour. There were no blankets.

By an unlikely chance, another desperate man was about to arrive at the Bar Z cabin. He was a former U. S. marine, who had fought in the battle of the Marne and thought of himself as a tough guy. He was heading from Salt Lake City to southern Arizona, where he had been offered a mining job. He had hitched rides to the Utah-Arizona border, and now he had de-



Brighty the Burro with Bob McKee, looking over Transept Canyon on the North Rim. 1918. Grand Canyon National Park #05273.

cidated that the shortest route was to go straight across the Grand Canyon on its trail and the new footbridge he'd read about. The marine found his way to Uncle Jim Owens's winter quarters, which was twenty-four miles northwest of the Bar Z cabin, but at a much lower and warmer elevation. When the marine told Owens his plan, Owens warned him against it. The snows were already deep; a blizzard was visible on the plateau above; and the head of the trail into the canyon was tucked away in a nook that was hard to find even in summer. The marine answered that he had grown up in Michigan winters and was a hardy woodsman. Owens reluctantly gave him directions and drew him a map of the trailhead and told him to spend his first night at the Bar Z cabin.

The marine made poor progress up the plateau, and he failed to reach the cabin that night. The next day he saw the cabin, but he didn't make the detour to it, and kept going. After another hard day he reached the canyon rim, but in the snow and fog he could not find the trailhead. He camped on the rim that night and

spent the next day searching for the trail. He camped for a third night in the blizzard, now without food, and without a fire because his matches were soaked. He knew that his feet were dangerously cold, going numb. He started a life-and-death retreat to the Bar Z cabin. He pushed on with frozen feet, through the night, until at dawn he found the cabin—and saw smoke rising from its chimney.

The thief saw the marine coming and stepped onto the porch, raised an axe, and ordered the marine to go away. The marine was shocked. He pleaded his desperation. The thief lunged at him with the axe, and the marine, who had once dodged German bayonets, dodged the axe and knocked it away and overpowered the thief and pulled a knife. The thief now pleaded his own desperation—a snowbound cabin with too little food for two. The marine was too exhausted, his feet too incapacitated, to fight further. The two settled into a tense truce.

The marine inspected his feet and found them severely frozen. He would have to stay here awhile, and he would need the thief's help to get



to Owens's place. The thief hadn't known about Owens's place, and didn't know the way to it, so he would need the marine's help to find it.

When the two men assessed their food situation, they decided there was only one thing to do. As Thomas McKee put it: "...the two desperate men went into Brighty's room, hit him with the axe and killed him. That night and for many a night after there were burro steaks for supper..."<sup>10</sup>

The two men remained in the cabin for about three months. The snow continued piling up until it was up to the roof. To fend off the cold they kept the fire burning constantly, obtaining wood by disassembling a log shed. They slept side by side for warmth, but they never stopped fearing each other. At night they placed their axe and knife in the other room and barred the door. They quarreled constantly.

The marine's legs were terribly painful. On one foot the ends of three toes were gone, and on the other foot large strands of flesh were rotting and sloughing off. He coated the wound with fat from Brighty's body. He made crutches and hobbled about. He also made two pairs of skis, with rawhide bindings made from Brighty's skin.

They watched Brighty's meat diminish. They set aside just enough to get them to Uncle Jim Owens's ranch. When their main food supply was gone, they cracked Brighty's bones and boiled them for soup, with alfalfa.

At last they were forced to head for the Owens place. The marine wrapped his arm over the thief's shoulder, and they struggled through the snow. It took all day to get ten miles. That evening they built a platform out of logs, lit a fire, and roasted some of their meat. They next day the marine was weaker, and they made only eight miles. The next day, now heading and looking down the edge of the Kaibab Plateau, they could see the Owens place six miles away.

The thief offered to go ahead to the ranch and bring back help, but the marine feared he would be aban-

doned and insisted they continue together. The thief slugged the marine, knocking him into the snow. The thief took off.

When the thief reached Jim Owens, Owens was amazed by his gaunt condition and by his story that he had recently come across the Grand Canyon. The thief fell into bed and a deep sleep. Hours later, when Jim Owens went out to feed his horses, his hunter's keen eyes spotted a speck about three miles away, a speck that seemed to move. Owens rode out to it and discovered it was the marine he had advised months before. When Owens got the marine to his cabin and the marine saw the sleeping thief, he drew his knife and would have killed the thief but was restrained. Owens and his employees were appalled by the marine's feet, rotted to naked bone. After nursing the marine for two days, two employees took him to Kanab for medical care. Both feet were amputated.

When the marine left, the thief became eager to leave. He told Jim Owens he wanted to get to Utah, but didn't want to pass through the Arizona town of Fredonia along the way. He decided to head for the Utah town of Hurricane, though it was seventy roadless, uninhabited miles away. Owens reluctantly gave him some supplies and watched him trek off into a looming blizzard. The thief was never seen again.

When the Bar Z cowboys returned to their cabin in the spring, they found Brighty's skinned hide. They buried it with ceremony and sorrow for an old friend

Brighty now became a legend that Thomas McKee told around his campfires. In his diary for September 7, 1923, McKee noted: "MATHER (Head of Nat. Park Svc) and 6 G arrived. Told Brighty story @ campfire."<sup>11</sup>

Memories of Brighty could have faded away, as have so many stories from the canyon's pioneer years. But Thomas McKee had written that *Sunset* article. The public library in Elgin, Illinois, saved its issues of *Sunset*, and thirty years later a lady walked into

the library to do some research about burros for a book she was writing on horses and their relatives. She had never even seen a real burro. The librarian found the *Sunset* article. The researcher was delighted. *This* was a great story.

The researcher was Marguerite Henry, America's favorite writer of horse stories, such as *Misty of Chincoteague*.

Marguerite Henry was the daughter of a Milwaukee book publisher, so she grew up surrounded by books, but she also grew up surrounded by a city. For her the countryside was an exotic and romantic realm of green pastures and elegant horses. As a teenager she discovered the novels of Zane Grey and the idea of a West of open spaces, beautiful landscapes, freedom, horses, and adventure. At age seven Marguerite decided to be a writer, but she was nearly forty when she published her first book for children, in 1940. A few years later Henry wrote her first horse novel, *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*, based on a true Vermont story, though she invented a boy named Joel who rescues a mistreated horse. After the success of this novel, Henry traveled to the Virginia coast to check out another true horse story—true stories were the best stories. Long ago a Spanish galleon had shipwrecked off Assateague Island and the horses on board had swum to the island. Eventually the settlers from nearby Chincoteague Island began making an annual trek to Assateague Island to round up wild ponies and swim them to Chincoteague Island, where they were auctioned off. Henry not only fell in love with this story, she fell in love with one of the ponies, whom she named Misty and brought home to her backyard stable and corral. She studied Misty's behavior carefully as she wrote a novel about her. Henry was better than most authors of animal stories in trying to portray animal behavior realistically, though she couldn't resist a certain amount of cuteness. Her illustrator, Wesley Dennis, with whom she collaborated on seventeen books, also took pains to make his drawings

realistic. *Misty of Chincoteague* was a huge success, and so was her next horse book, *King of the Wind*, which won the Newbery Award.

When Henry discovered the story of the tough, free-spirited Grand Canyon burro, she knew it was her kind of story. She tried to get in touch with Thomas McKee, but her letters to him at various Grand Canyon addresses were all returned as "Addressee Unknown." Curiously, in his *Sunset* article McKee had never identified himself as the owner of the North Rim tourist camp. Henry traveled to the Grand Canyon and talked with rangers, wranglers, and lodge managers, but she couldn't find anyone who even knew who Thomas McKee was. But Henry did find lots of stories about Brighty, about his free spirit, his friendliness, and his adventures.

Marguerite and her husband Sid, who was terrified of heights, rode mules from the North Rim to Phantom Ranch, and she took lots of notes about the scenes and plants and wildlife Brighty would have known. She did her best to see the canyon through Brighty's eyes, drinking from Bright Angel Creek because "I wanted to know just how cold and delicious it was. And I sampled the burro browse that grew in sprigs up through rock crevices; I had to know how it would taste. And I hiked part of the way, making believe I *was* Brighty."<sup>12</sup>

On the rim Marguerite Henry sought out a large overhang on the Cliff Springs Trail where Teddy Roosevelt and Jim Owens had spent a night during their mountain-lion hunt in 1913. Henry believed that Brighty was along on this trip, and she needed to camp there. Park rangers warned her that she might be visited by a mountain lion coming for a drink, and indeed in the middle of the night she woke up to a whimpering cry and the sound of cat feet landing nearby: "Terrified, I dived deep into my sleeping bag, like a headless turtle. I had come especially to see a mountain lion, but I was too much a coward to look! Next morning I took pictures of the paw prints in the wet sand around the pool within the cave.

They were—lion tracks!...It was easy to write that scary mountain lion chapter the next morning!"<sup>13</sup>

Marguerite Henry wanted to take home a Grand Canyon burro, just as she had taken *Misty* home. It would help her write realistically about burros. She tried to persuade park superintendent Harold Bryant to catch one of the canyon's wild burros for her, but he declined. Bryant tried to sound like he was doing her a favor: "Already you have created in your mind a warm image of him. If you were to own one of these wild critters, he might be an ornery fellow and ruin that image."<sup>14</sup>

When Henry got home she found a burro in her own neighborhood. His name was Jiggs, and she renamed him Brighty. She moved Brighty in with *Misty*. She studied Brighty's behavior, and that of a neighbor boy named Tex, who often rode and played with Brighty. Tex would become the model for the boy character of the novel, Homer Hobbs.

Marguerite Henry created *Brighty of the Grand Canyon* from three main sources: Thomas McKee's *Sunset* article; the stories and experiences she got at the canyon; and her own literary imagination. It seems that some of the stories she heard at the canyon already contained some imagination. This has left the novel a mixture of reality and fiction.

McKee's *Sunset* article emphasized Brighty's free spirit, starting with its title: "Brighty, Free Citizen: How the Sagacious Hermit Donkey of the Grand Canyon Maintained His Liberty for Thirty Years." (The word "burro" is the Spanish word for donkey). It was this free spirit that had inspired Marguerite Henry's interest, and she emphasized it in the novel. She avoids saying that Brighty was brought to the canyon by humans and says only that a prospector named Old Timer found Brighty "running wild" in the canyon. She begins the novel with Brighty asleep amid the canyon's wildness: "... he seemed part of the dust and the ageless limestone that rose in great towering battlements behind him."<sup>15</sup>

Several chapters later, beneath a Wesley Dennis drawing of Brighty in the nighttime canyon, Henry asks:

Was there a wildness in Brighty that could never be tamed? A need for freedom stronger than the need for companionship? Daytimes the canyon was all he wanted—winds rumpling his mane, birds whistling at him, and Bright Angel Creek talking and laughing. But sometimes at night a loneliness crept in and he would bray to the winking stars as if asking them to come down and play with him.<sup>16</sup>

Brighty does like people. He is happy to see Old Timer, who has found a promising vein of copper. But a bad guy, Jake Irons, shows up and murders Old Timer for his ore, and takes his gold watch. When Uncle Jim and the sheriff come along, Jake Irons flees. When the sheriff tries to turn Brighty into a pack animal, Brighty flees. Brighty spends a night under the overhang at Cliff Springs, and a mountain lion attacks him, but Brighty fights it off. Uncle Jim finds the wounded Brighty and leads him up to his North Rim cabin, where he nurses Brighty back to health. President Teddy Roosevelt shows up for a mountain-lion hunt, and Uncle Jim takes Brighty along, but when the dogs tree a mountain lion, it jumps onto Brighty's back. Someone, maybe President Roosevelt himself, shoots the mountain lion right off Brighty's back. Roosevelt admires Brighty's bravery. Uncle Jim ties the dead mountain lion onto Brighty's back. That night they camp under the Cliff Springs overhang.

Just like in McKee's article, Brighty spends the summer hanging out with the people at the Wylie camp. McKee's article never said anything about how his son employed Brighty to haul water from a spring, but Henry may have heard this story, for she invents a camp owner's son, Homer Hobbs, who does just that. Where McKee mentioned that Brighty would give rides to small children but not larger children, Henry adjusts this to say

that Brighty gives rides to kids but “turned demon” if an adult tried to ride him.

When the novel’s Brighty returns to the inner canyon for winter, he is caught by Jake Irons, who tries to haul Brighty across the river on a cable car, but Brighty breaks out, falls into the river, and swims for his freedom. Another summer, Brighty watches the construction of the footbridge across the canyon, and for the dedication ceremony President Roosevelt shows up. Roosevelt is supposed to be the first to cross the bridge, but he defers to Brighty. Brighty later uses the bridge to cross to the south side of the river, with its long Tonto Plateau and herds of wild burros, and for awhile he becomes the leader of a herd.

Dethroned from his herd, Brighty is captured by Jake Irons, who is trying to escape the law by heading to Utah, even though it’s now winter on the North Rim. Irons and Brighty take shelter from a blizzard in a deserted cabin. There’s a knock on the door, and it’s Homer Hobbs, who has ignored the warnings of Uncle Jim and is trying to hike to the canyon and across the bridge to get to Flagstaff and a job as a lumberjack.

Clearly, Marguerite Henry has heard the story of Brighty’s demise. One of her sources was an account by NPS editor A. E. DeMaray, published in *Outing* magazine in February 1923. As Jake Irons grows hungry, his “eyes studied the burro as if he had never seen him before, weighing the ounces of meat on the ribs, counting the mouthfuls...He brought the gun to his shoulder and pointed at the wide space between Brighty’s eyes.”<sup>17</sup> Just then Uncle Jim arrives and captures Irons. But one night when Homer is supposed to be guarding Irons, Homer falls asleep, and Irons grabs the rifle. He tries to shoot Uncle Jim, but Brighty jumps in between and takes the shot in his shoulder. A rescue party arrives and hauls Brighty on a sled to safety.

The novel ends with the suggestion that Brighty’s spirit lives on today:

Especially on moonlit nights a shaggy little form can be seen flirt-

ing along the ledges, a thin swirl of dust rising behind him. Some say it is nothing but moonbeams caught up in a cloud. But the older guides swear it is trail dust out of the past, kicked up by Brighty himself, the roving spirit of the Grand Canyon—forever wild, forever free.<sup>18</sup>

Marguerite Henry did turn Brighty into an enduring symbol of the Grand Canyon. But occasionally she got carried away, especially in her suggestion that it was Brighty, in migrating in and out of the canyon, who had created the trail from the North Rim to the river.

Another dubious claim involves the mountain-lion hunt of Teddy Roosevelt and Jim Owens. This hunt really did happen, in 1913, after Roosevelt had left the White House, but it is questionable whether Brighty was along. Neither Thomas nor Bob McKee ever mentioned that Brighty was on the hunt or had even met Teddy Roosevelt—but then, the McKees didn’t arrive at the canyon until four years after Roosevelt’s visit. Roosevelt wrote an account of the hunt and even named two of the three burros on the hunt, but he didn’t mention Brighty: “When we started on our cougar hunt there were seven of

us, with six pack-animals. The latter included one mule, three donkeys—two of them, Ted and Possum, very wise donkeys—and two horses.”<sup>19</sup>

Both Thomas and Bob McKee gave good reasons why Jim Owens would not have trusted Brighty as a pack animal, especially on a trip with a former president. Bob McKee: “Uncle Jim had been dubious about Brighty as a regular pack animal, since the burro had not done any work for years.”<sup>20</sup> Brighty was probably about 25-years-old at the time of the hunt, and it was only five years later that, as Robert described, Brighty was moving very slowly when hauling water for the camp. Thomas McKee spent half of his *Sunset* article detailing Brighty’s dislike of serving as a pack animal and his strategies for escaping it. McKee repeated some of this in a 1954 letter to Marguerite Henry: “Brighty could divest himself of a pack load...He was known as a free agent and sometimes was forcibly seized and made to pack hunter’s loads. Uncle Jim used to smile when he saw such. He knew what would happen before long...Brighty’s technique was to sneak away from his kidnappers; then rub the pack against trees until the lashings loosened and the load fell off.”<sup>21</sup>



Theodore Roosevelt and his hunting party at Uncle Jim Owen’s cabin on the North Rim. Left to right: Archibald B. Roosevelt, Nicholas Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Uncle Jimmy Owens, Quinten Roosevelt, Jesse Cummins. The dog is “Pot Hound” (with Uncle Jim). 1913. Grand Canyon National Park #10455

The archives at Grand Canyon National Park includes a photograph of Roosevelt, Owens, and three burros ready for their hunting trip, but the photo includes no identification of the burros. I took this photo, plus a photo of Brighty with the McKees, to the Grand Canyon mule barn and showed it to the wranglers, who have plenty of experience at telling apart burro-like creatures, and they said that the hunting-trip burros didn't look like Brighty. Since Marguerite Henry went to the trouble of camping under the Cliff Springs overhang where Roosevelt's party had stayed, taking her chances of meeting a mountain lion, she probably sincerely believed that Brighty had been there. Perhaps she had picked up a canyon legend that Brighty was on the hunt. Or perhaps, since Henry was a big admirer of Teddy Roosevelt, she couldn't resist the idea of putting them together. She concludes the hunt chapter with a scene of Roosevelt writing lines of poetic praise for the Grand Canyon, lines that are nearly a quote from his true account of the hunt.

A few months after *Brighty of the Grand Canyon* was published, Elizabeth McKee went into a bookstore shopping for a gift for her granddaughter—Bob's daughter—and she discovered the novel. Thomas McKee introduced himself to Marguerite Henry: "We have read it, and it makes us homesick because we are the people who managed the summer camp on the North Rim, and Brighty was a resident of our camp for several years."<sup>22</sup> McKee sent her a photo of Bob sitting on Brighty's back on the canyon edge: "As my wife and I read your book, we knew in a twinkling that our son was the Homer Hobbs of your story!" Henry was delighted to learn that her character was real. She and McKee enjoyed a long correspondence, and he shared more memories and photos of Brighty. McKee said he wasn't surprised that Henry hadn't found anyone at the canyon who had known him, since around 1920 the North Rim was very isolated, and the people on the South Rim, with its

fancy El Tovar Hotel, always looked down on the crude camp on the opposite rim.

Brighty got turned into a movie in the same serendipitous way he got turned into a novel.

In 1963 a young mother named Betty Booth walked into a suburban Detroit bookstore looking for books that would keep her three young sons entertained on a long road vacation. The bookstore clerk suggested *Brighty of the Grand Canyon*. As Betty read it to her family, her husband Steve also found the story captivating. Steve was a 39-year-old newspaperman and TV producer, who had done some corporate films. It seems that Steve had wanted to do something more ambitious. He decided that Brighty would make a wonderful film, especially for kids like his own sons. Five months later he acquired the film rights to the novel. Steve Booth tried to find a Hollywood studio to fund and make the film, but he ran into great skepticism. Animal movies for kids were almost a Walt Disney monopoly, and it would be hard for other studios to compete with Disney at their own game. And it sounded like filming a movie inside the Grand Canyon was going to be especially challenging and expensive. Booth was forced to raise money from private investors, which proved difficult. The movie nearly foundered, but then Booth found a director who gave the project high credibility.

Norman Foster started his Hollywood career as an actor in the 1930s; he was the husband of Claudette Colbert. Then Foster became a director, mainly of formula movies like *Charlie Chan*. In 1942 he won more respectability by finishing a movie started by Orson Welles, *Journey into Fear*. In the 1950s Foster started working for Walt Disney, and he co-wrote and directed the phenomenal hit *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier*, and its sequel *Davy Crockett and the River Pirates*. Now that Foster was an expert on rivers, Walt Disney sent him into the Grand Canyon to scout out locations and problems for filming the Disney movie about John Wesley Powell, *Ten Who Dared*. Foster

didn't direct that movie, but now he knew the Grand Canyon, and he also knew burros from having worked with them in several western movies.

Foster brought with him an actor who gave the Brighty movie even more credibility. Back in 1942 Foster had worked with the star and co-writer of *Journey into Fear*, Joseph Cotten, a close associate of Orson Welles. Cotten's first Hollywood movie was *Citizen Kane*, in which he played a close associate of Orson Welles's character Charles Foster Kane. Next Cotten starred in Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and soon *Gaslight*. Cotten's screen persona was a smart, sophisticated, soft-spoken gentleman. In *Brighty* he played the rugged Jim Owens. If it was true that Joseph Cotten's career was going downhill, he gave a large boost to the image of Jim Owens.

To play Homer Hobbs, Foster came up with an Arizona boy, Richard "Dandy" Curran, who had already appeared in one Hollywood movie, thanks to his mother having been the Miss America of 1949.

But who would play Brighty? Foster "auditioned" many burros but couldn't find the right star. During a frustrated phone call with Marguerite Henry, Henry said that she had the star right there: her own Brighty. Skeptical, Foster traveled to Illinois to meet Brighty, and he won the part. Brighty too was skeptical about being a movie star, about leaving the familiar flat prairie and riding in a van to Arizona and hiking into the weird Grand Canyon and being coaxed to behave in lots of strange ways. To keep Brighty calm and willing, he was placed under the care of Marguerite Henry's neighbor, Tex, who had ridden and taken care of Brighty since both were kids. Marguerite Henry, in a newsletter she wrote to her fans, said that she was waking up in the middle of the night and worrying about the dangers facing Brighty in the canyon.

The filming took three and a half months in the spring and summer of 1965. Only about a month of that was at the Grand Canyon. For most

of the North Rim scenes, Foster substituted the high country of Dixie National Forest in southern Utah, where his crew rebuilt a house used in the 1943 movie *My Friend Flicka*. They also built there a replica of Jim Owens's cabin, based on old photos. Booth and Foster were proud of not using any sound stages for *Brightly*. They did film a few scenes on the real North Rim, including one of Teddy Roosevelt giving some lines from his famous "leave it as it is" speech.

To film inside the Grand Canyon, Booth rented a helicopter, which made about 1,200 flights to haul film equipment, props, and people in and out.<sup>23</sup> Booth also used a thirty-five-mule pack train. A trailer near Bright Angel Lodge served as headquarters, with radio communications to the bottom. The actors stayed at Phantom Ranch and at the rim lodges. All these expenses raised the cost of making the movie to half a million dollars, which might have been cheap by Disney standards, but it was a lot for a small, independent company like Booth's.

By the time canyon filming was wrapping up at the start of June, it was 112 degrees at the bottom. The actors didn't need to act at being hot and tired.

Even inside the Grand Canyon the film crew had to be careful not to catch glimpses of 1965, such as a footbridge across the river or a backpacker on a well-groomed trail. The biggest problem was that the transcanyon water pipeline was being built at this time, and the construction company had its own helicopters flying overhead frequently. Park superintendent Howard Stricklin told Booth that his film crew would need to stay out of the way of the construction crew, which was camped four miles north of Phantom Ranch. But Foster broke the rules to film a scene of *Brightly* at Ribbon Falls, which is nearly six miles north of Phantom Ranch. On June 15 the National Park Service filed a complaint against Booth in United States District Court, saying that he "did drive livestock over trails closed to public use due to hazardous

and dangerous conditions..." Foster had ignored a "plainly marked sign as follows: 'Trail closed to livestock travel—hikers may be delayed.' Said sign on trail north of Phantom Ranch. Above named defendants driving up trail from Phantom Ranch one mule and three burros causing damage to construction work."<sup>24</sup> At least *Brightly* didn't get arrested. The novel, which includes a drawing of *Brightly* at Ribbon Falls, said that "*Brightly* could never resist the pretty beckoning finger of Ribbon Falls."<sup>25</sup>

Booth probably got off to a bad start with the National Park Service when he asked them to supply him with a cage full of Kaibab squirrels for extras; the superintendent told Booth to go find his own squirrels in the wild. Booth did bring along his own mountain lion for a scene where *Brightly* tussles with a mountain lion. The mountain lion was actually tame and de-fanged and de-clawed, and the trainer had to prod it with a stick to get it to snarl. It took the trainer four days to get *Brightly* to make a half-hearted kick at the mountain lion, but then *Brightly* and the lion got into the spirit of the thing. The scenes showing the Roosevelt mountain-lion hunt used another, wild mountain lion, which had been captured for the movie. The scene in which *Brightly* breaks out of the cable car and jumps into the river was carefully staged to avoid any real danger, and it used *Brightly*'s stunt-double. Marguerite Henry was relieved that *Brightly* came home from the Grand Canyon in great shape.

The story in the movie follows the novel fairly closely, with a few Hollywood indulgences. It gives *Brightly* credit for discovering Old Timer's mine; it changes the mine from a copper mine into a gold mine; and it adds a literal cliffhanger-ending with Jake Irons dangling from the edge of a cliff. It also skips the bridge dedication and the story of *Brightly* leading the herd of wild burros, both of which would have been impractical to film. The movie ends with a summary of Marguerite Henry's closing lines about *Brightly*'s spirit living for-

ever.

The movie had its world premiere in November, 1966, in the Detroit suburb where Steve Booth lived. It was a long way from Hollywood. The movie didn't do very well at the box office; Booth didn't have the clout and resources to get major national distribution.

Bob McKee had mixed feelings about the movie: "The burro was well cast—a ringer for the original. Uncle Jim Owen was much more of a frontiersman than the one depicted—rough beard and a slouch hat." Bob was a bit miffed that Homer Hobbs, who might be mistaken for himself, had messed up: "...the boy is quite unnecessary as part of the story. About the only important thing he does is to go to sleep when he had the duty of guarding the prisoner."<sup>26</sup>

Steve Booth became very fond of *Brightly*, and he commissioned sculptor Peter Jepsen to make a life-sized, bronze statue of *Brightly* that cost \$15,000, along with dozens of miniature, 10-pound copies Booth gave to people involved with the movie. Booth donated one miniature to Grand Canyon National Park in March 1966, which was placed in the South Rim Visitor Center, with an exhibit on early Grand Canyon tourism. In December 1967, after the original statue had served its publicity duties, Booth donated it to the park, a "Christmas gift." The park planned a dedication ceremony, with Booth and Jepsen and Henry present, but a winter storm canceled those plans. The statue went into the Visitor Center, and later it was moved to the Visitor Center's outdoor patio. Some park rangers felt that the statue belonged on the North Rim, *Brightly*'s true home. In late 1968 the park's chief naturalist, Merrill D. Beal, wrote to Marguerite Henry reassuring her about the proposed move, which was rumored to be a demotion, and Henry wrote back: "Of course you are right!...His real place, as you say, is there...with the new Visitor Center *Brightly* will again be the center of loving hands. Our own real-life *Brightly* is very doleful unless he is

surrounded by admiring children."<sup>27</sup> Yet it would take fifteen years, and a major controversy, before Brighty arrived on the North Rim.

Park rangers may have had another motive for wanting to move Brighty to a location where he would be admired by only ten percent of the tourists seeing him on the South Rim. For many years the park had been worried by the problem of feral burros. Brighty wasn't the only burro that prospectors had left in the canyon. Over the decades the burro population in the canyon had grown into the thousands. Burros were natives of Africa, introduced to America by the Spanish, and their behavior patterns were a bad fit for the American desert. The cute-looking burros were actually more aggressive and territorial than the native desert bighorn sheep; phalanxes of burros prevented bighorns from using springs. Burros were much more destructive of vegetation. By the 1960s visitors at South Rim overlooks looked down on a Tonto Plateau that was a maze of burro trails. The bighorn population had been dwindling, and even hikers seldom saw any, while some hikers encountered burros that blocked trails or camping spots. The park had been dealing with the burro problem quietly and sporadically, by shooting burros, but these disorganized efforts had only slowed down the trend. As the idea of ecosystems became the foundation of wildlife management policies, the NPS began more actively protecting native species and opposing invasive species. In the 1960s the NPS sent military helicopters into the canyon, with rangers armed with rifles to shoot burros. Park managers thought the burro problem was solved, but the burros began proliferating again. In the late 1970s park managers planned further efforts to shoot burros, but it became a very public and loud controversy. The idea of ecosystems may have won respect with the public, but it didn't carry nearly the appeal of cute burros. For most of the public, a news report about Grand Canyon burros invoked an image of Brighty. How

could Smoky-Bear rangers *murder* Brighty? Thousands of outraged letters flooded in.

As they read angry letters and editorials, park managers could look out their window into the patio where the Brighty statue still remained, with families happily admiring him. Park managers realized that they had helped create their own public-relations problem. In April, 1978, Superintendent Merle Stitt decided to remove the Brighty statue and place it in storage.

Now the furor around the burro removal plan turned into furor over removal of the Brighty statue. The Wild Burro Protection Association, based in Tucson, issued a press release calling for Merle Stitt's resignation:

Superintendent Stitt's illegal and unethical actions to remove wild burros from the Grand Canyon, and his capricious and paranoid removal of the life sized statue of the famous wild burro "Brighty of the Grand Canyon" indicate a loss of touch with reality...

In 1967 the National Park Service recognized the burro's contribution to the historical and cultural dimensions of the Canyon by sanctioning the erection of a 600 pound, life-sized bronze statue of Brighty...

Brighty...is part of the folklore of the Southwest...

In place of the Brighty statue, the Park Service has mounted an exhibit explaining the alleged problems caused by wild burros...

If necessary we will go to court to have Brighty returned...<sup>28</sup>

The press release announced the launch of a national "Bring Back Brighty" campaign, which included petition and letting-writing drives. The petition read: "We demand that immediate steps be taken to return the statue of Brighty to its rightful place."<sup>29</sup>

Another organization, the Southwestern Donkey and Mule Society, protested in a letter:

Do you really think that the removal of this statue will make us forget the burros? All you are do-

ing is rubbing salt in a very sensitive wound.

How many appeals have you received in behalf of the Big Horn Sheep you so ardently protect? How can a few men decide which of God's creatures is deserving of this protection? It appears that the Big Horn Sheep have done nothing for mankind to deserve the "award" they are receiving...

Perhaps you might consider thinning out the herd of Big Horn Sheep if you must do some thinning, and leave more "flora" for the burros.<sup>30</sup>

For damage control, park managers drafted a form letter, which was a bit more diplomatic than the internal NPS memo from which it started. The memo offered all the reasons why the Brighty statue was inappropriate. Park museums were supposed to present facts, and the Brighty novel "is fiction and not based on either historic or biological fact." The novel represented a pre-ecological worldview in which "Burro life is an enchanting, make-believe world within the park in harmony with all other 'good' animals." The novel endorsed the anti-ecological view that predators are evil, and it glamorized the practices of Jim Owens. The memo claimed that the Brighty statue was just a promotional gimmick for a private film company. Mainly, the novel and statue gave a friendly face to burros: "Many people do not disassociate make-believe from fact about feral burros in the park. This is evidenced by the thousands of letters the park has received...Ironically, many persons base their comments on this serious environmental problem solely on the story of 'Brighty' or the existence of the 'Brighty' statue."<sup>31</sup> The park's form letter also emphasized that it was the duty of the NPS to protect the natural environment, and that scientific studies now made it clear that burros were causing serious damage.

Marguerite Henry didn't see the ecological light. When the Brighty statue was removed, the head of the Wild Burro Protection Association

called her up, and Henry began adding a postscript to all her correspondence with children:

P.S. I've just learned, to my sorrow, that the wonderful life-size bronze sculpture of Brighty has been removed from its place in the Visitors Bureau at the Grand Canyon. The people who put it in storage claim that all the burros in the Canyon should be destroyed before they cause a shortage of food for the bighorn sheep.

In reality, the possibility of such a shortage is remote because the burros graze on the Tonto Plateau within the lower canyon, while the bighorn sheep graze in the highest mountain tops. As to the number of burros in the Canyon, the figure is exaggerated beyond belief by the enemies of all the little "Brightys" in the world.

If you want to have the statue of Brighty put back where it belongs and—even more important—if you want to save the real burros, it would help to write a letter stating your feelings to...<sup>32</sup>

If only Superintendent Bryant, a quarter of a century before, had given Marguerite Henry an ornery wild burro that ruined her "warm image" of burros. All those children writing outraged letters about the murder of Brighty were a public-relations disaster for the NPS. The NPS finally gave up its plans for mass executions of burros, and it began, with the help of private organizations, to round up the burros and remove them from the canyon, even using helicopters to airlift them out, at a huge expense.

The statue of Brighty remained hidden away for a few years, until after the wild burros were safely out of the canyon and the uproar about them had died down. By 1983, if not earlier, Brighty was released from captivity and placed in the lobby of Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim, in his old neighborhood. The park was still shy about publicity for the statue. When Steve Booth found out about the statue by hearsay, he wrote to the park superintendent and proposed

a long-delayed dedication ceremony. The superintendent wrote back apologizing for not having informed Booth about the Brighty statue, but he declined the idea of any dedication ceremony.

The Brighty statue is still there today, with a very shiny nose from tens of thousands of children—and adults, and even park superintendents—rubbing his nose for good luck and friendliness and a connection with the history of the Grand Canyon.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Louise Hinchliffe to Danny Cushing, December 30, 1971. File 62441, Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection (GCNPMC).
- 2 This account is problematic because, between two rough drafts and the *Sunset* article, McKee gave significant variations of events. The version presented here generally follows the *Sunset* version, and adds the most plausible details from the more-detailed rough drafts. All these sources are found in file GRCA 62441, GCNPMC.
- 3 Owens's name is sometimes mistaken as "Owen," including by Marguerite Henry in her novel, and the movie repeated her mistake.
- 4 Marguerite Henry, *Brighty of the Grand Canyon* (Chicago: Rand McNally: 1953) p 64 (in the Aladdin paperback edition).
- 5 Robert W. McKee, *Recollections*, 1987. File GCRA 65570, GCNPMC.
- 6 Thomas McKee to Marguerite Henry, January 19, 1954. File GCRA 62441, GCNPMC.
- 7 Thomas McKee, *Sunset*, August 1922.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Thomas McKee, "The Passing of Bright Angel: A Saga of the Grand Canyon." File GCRA 62441, GCNPMC.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Diaries of Thomas McKee. File GCRA 65570, GCNPMC.
- 12 Marguerite Henry, *Dear Readers and Riders*, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1969) p 80.
- 13 Ibid, p 81.
- 14 Quoted in *Arizona Highways*, May 1966, p 3. "Norman Foster's Brighty of the Grand Canyon."
- 15 Marguerite Henry, *Brighty*, p 13.
- 16 Ibid, p 49.
- 17 Ibid, p 187-8.
- 18 Ibid, p 222.
- 19 Theodore Roosevelt, *A Book Lover's Holiday in the Open* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919) p 18.
- 20 Robert McKee, *recollections*, 1987. File GCRA 65570, GCNPMC.
- 21 Thomas McKee to Marguerite Henry, March 12, 1954. File GCRA 62441, GCNPMC.
- 22 Quoted in Marguerite Henry, "The Story Be-

hind Brighty." File GCRA 75971, GCNPMC.

23 Many years later, in an interview with an NPS historian, Elling Halvorsen, the head of the construction company that was building the transcanyon pipeline at that time, claimed that it was his helicopter that filmed the aerial scenes in the movie, and his work crew that built the river cable car for hauling their supplies. Both claims seem to be incorrect.

24 United States District Court document. File GCRA 75830, GCNPMC.

25 Marguerite Henry, *Brighty*, p 52.

26 Robert McKee to Peter and Martha Kruger. File 62441, GCNPMC.

27 Marguerite Henry to Merrill D. Beal, December 14, 1968. File GCRA 99889, GCNPMC.

28 Press release, Wild Burro Protection Association, April 20, 1978. File GCRA 99889, GCNPMC.

29 Ibid.

30 Scotty Kolb, Secretary-Treasurer of the Southwestern Donkey and Mule Society, to US Department of the Interior, June 26, 1978. File GCRA 99889, GCNPMC.

31 Memo, drafted by James E. Walters, Resource Management Specialist, GCNP, May 12, 1978. File GCRA 99889, GCNPMC.

32 Marguerite Henry letter to Carmine Cardamone, November 25, 1978. File GCRA 99889, GCNPMC.

**Grand Canyon Historical Society**

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## Emails / Letters

My name is Barbara Stephens Odderstol and I recently attended the 2012 GCHS Symposium and presented my history of growing up at the Canyon—"Trails of An Early Canyon Kid." I've read, with much interest, Louis Schellbach's log entries of the early '40s. I remember him and his family well. I can offer a detail or two about the Elliot Roosevelt wedding. It was my father, Judge Stanley Stephens, who conducted the marriage ceremony and the "Stevens" Schellbach referred to in his 12.02.44 log. As for the Spencer family: Frank Spencer was one, if not the original, of the early managers of the El Tovar and Hopi House curio shops. I worked for Mr. Spencer from 1944 until he retired and Joe Ernst took his place as manager of the shops. Frank and his wife, Mabel, lived above the Hopi House and I was often invited to visit with Mrs. Spencer in her home. I don't know, for a fact, if she was related to Fred Harvey—the father of

the family—that started the Harvey Houses which followed along the Santa Fe RR from Chicago to Los Angeles. However, she was a lovely and charming lady. I have a photo of her, Blanche Kolb, and my mother "serving tea" at some occasion at the Kolb home. Such good memories! Keep on publishing.

Regards,  
*Barbara Odderstol*

.....

Enclosed are two obituaries of former "Harvey Girls" that were in the *Prescott Courier* if you are interested.

*Johnnie Bailey Farquer*

**Dorothy Socolofsky Wills**  
Sept 27, 1928–May 23, 2010  
...[Dorothy] graduated from Van Nuys, Calif., High School in 1946,

attended the University of New Mexico and worked at the Grand Canyon in the dining room of the Bright Angel Lodge during the summers of 1949 and '50....

**Lorraine G Shankwitz**

October 1920–January 28, 2011

In 1938, Lorraine was selected and hired as a "Harvey Girl" and began her love affair with Arizona when, for the next two years she was assigned to the Harvey Houses on the Arizona Santa Fe Railroad line in Winslow, Williams, Grand Canyon and Seligman....