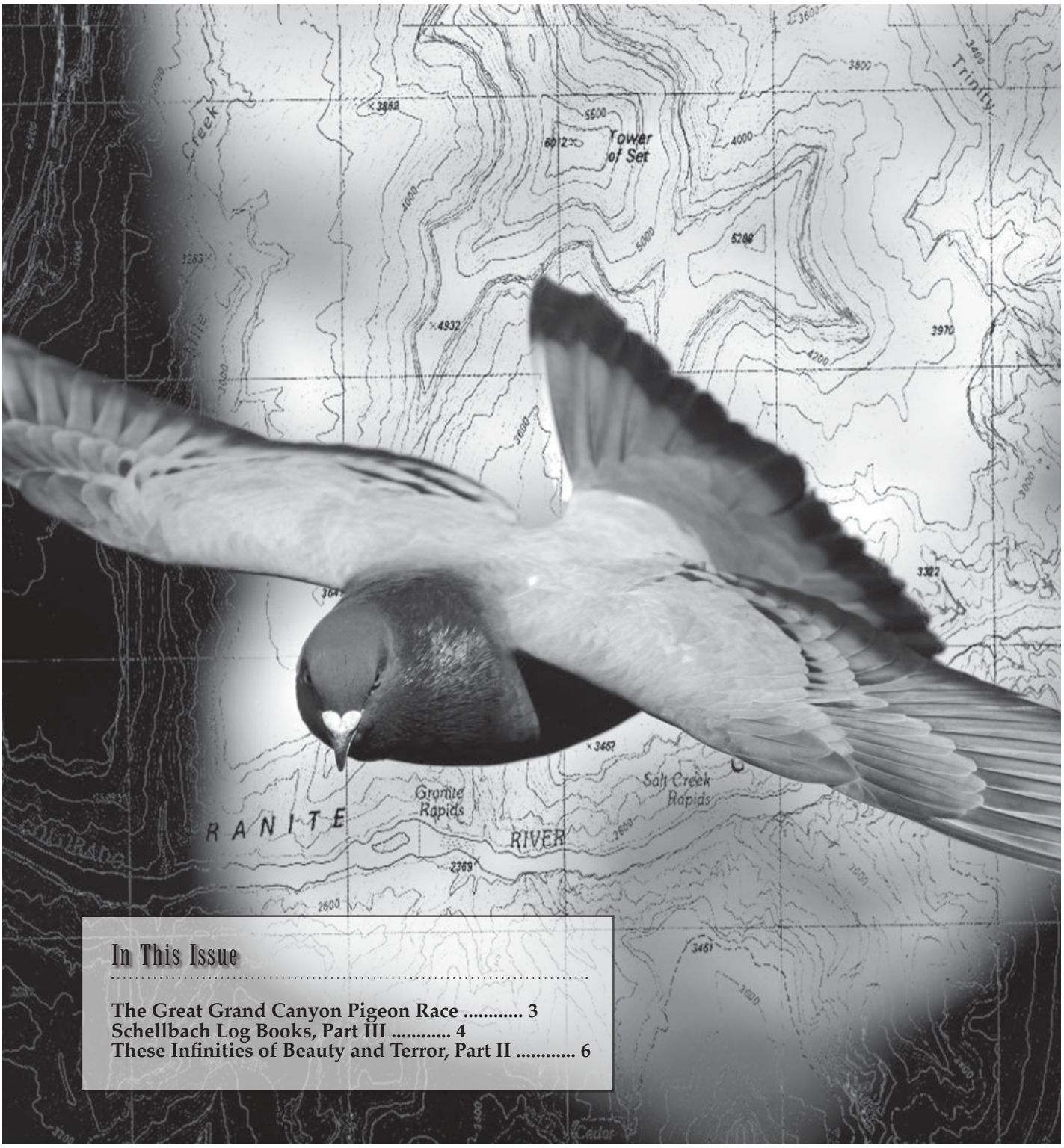
The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the Grand Canyon Historical Society

Volume 22 : Number 3 www.GrandCanyonHistory.org Summer 2011



In This Issue

President's Letter

It is that time of year when the temperatures hit the triple digits here in Phoenix and the hot weather is broken only by the occasional epic dust storm. This is the time of year when the cool breezes of the canyon rim make the peak season crowds worth braving. It is also the time of our annual Grand Canyon Historical Society picnic (held at the generally un-crowded Shoshone Point). I plan to be there and hope to see many of you there too—it is a great way to meet other members face to face to share canyon history and stories (and hotdogs).

Planning and preparation for the 2012 Grand Canyon History Symposium is still going ahead full-throttle. We recently ended our call for presenters and have received a large number of proposals covering a wide range of canyon topics. The presentation committee will have a hard time making their final selections, but the end result is sure to be a fascinating series of talks on par with the last two excellent symposiums. We are also pleased to announce that the symposium has selected two notable canyon experts and explorers to be our keynote dinner speakers. Boatman and historian Brad Dimock will be discussing the 100th anniversary of the Kolb brothers' historic trip and geologist Wayne Ranney will introduce us to the long line of notable geologists and scientists whose work has helped shape our knowledge and appreciation of the canyon. For the latest information on the symposium, be sure to check the GCHS website and our new Facebook page.

Over the past year it has been heartening to see how many society members (both those on the board and general members) have stepped forward to work on the symposium. It is a monumental task done entirely through volunteer effort—a tribute not just to the important historical figures of the canyon's past but to the love and appreciation that still exists for the canyon today. For those of you wishing to become more involved in the society, our annual election of new board members is coming soon and we are actively seeking new board members to serve a three-year term (you do not need to live near the canyon). If you are interested in serving on the board (or know a good candidate), please contact me for more information.

Thank you and happy hiking!!!

Erik Berg
GCHS President

NOW! Find us on Facebook.

Cover: Photo illustration by Mary Williams

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

The Ol' Pioneer

The Magazine of the
Grand Canyon Historical Society

Volume 22 : Number 3
Summer 2011

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 86003-1405.

Editor: Mary Williams
Submit photos and stories to the editor of *The Ol' Pioneer* at: info@marywilliamsdesign.com or 4880 N Weatherford Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001. (928) 779-3377. Please submit written articles and photos electronically on CD or via email if possible. You may mail photos or slides for scanning if needed.

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

The Great Grand Canyon Pigeon Races

By Keith Green
Original research by Bob Audretsch

There was a time, back in the late 1970s, when a pigeon showed-up at Phantom Ranch there at the bottom of Grand Canyon. I was part of the Fred Harvey crew, and we were entranced by this pigeon. Did this mean that Phantom Ranch was becoming a monument like a statue in Central Park in New York City? Was this the first of hundreds of pigeons that would eventually adorn the canyon trails and rest stops? Other staffers secretly fed bread crumbs to the pigeon. I think we named it, but I can't remember what.

On the other hand, the NPS Phantom rangers took a dim view of the pigeon. They saw it as an invasive species that would, beyond a doubt, destroy the natural ecology of Grand Canyon.

Discussion raged about the pigeon. It had "naturally" found its way to the bottom of the canyon, after all, just like every other natural species of plant and animal that existed in Grand Canyon at the time. Why couldn't it stay?

A few days later, the rangers posted a sign in the office of the Phantom Ranger Station exclaiming, "GET THE PIGEON!!!" Within a few weeks, the pigeon was gone. Nobody would fess-up as to what happened to it. Little did anybody know that that pigeon was one of maybe a hundred pigeons that have been in the canyon during recent history.

I am referring here to the Mile High Pigeon Racing Club of Prescott. Who ever came up with the idea is unknown, but the object was to race pigeons from the bottom of Grand Canyon to Prescott, Arizona. The feasibility of the idea was tested sometime close to July 1, 1939, when a number of pigeons were released on Grand Canyon's south rim. Every pigeon made it back safely to their lofts in Prescott. So, on July 8, five Prescott pigeons were taken down the trail in boxes by mule.

This wasn't the first time mules had carried birds into the canyon. Several years earlier, mules had carried chickens down the trail. A chicken coop had been built at Phantom Ranch down by the Fred Harvey mule corral. The chickens provided eggs for breakfast most mornings.

Five Prescott homing pigeons were released on July 9, 1939 at Phantom Ranch at 6:00 AM. Can you imagine what today's protectors of the natural environment would have to say about that?

None of the five homing pigeons flew back to Prescott. Where did they go? Imagine flying out of your cage and looking up at those towering cliffs and not knowing where the updrafts are. I can relate! I've stood at the bottom of the canyon looking up 5,000 feet at the rim wondering, "Where's the elevator?"

Could those pigeons possibly have found a nice place in the canyon to settle and raise a family? Was it an offspring of the original Prescott Five that suddenly appeared at Phantom Ranch in the late 1970s?

Actually, a clue to the fate of those five pigeons arrived at Prescott in a box by railway express several days later. It was one of the pigeons, and it was still alive! However, it had breast scars and damaged tail feathers. I would guess it was attacked by a hawk or some other raptor while flying out of the canyon. Still, could canyon predators have eaten the other four pigeons before they could get out of there?

Pigeon experts doubted that any pigeon could escape Grand Canyon. Homing pigeons usually don't circle higher than a thousand feet before finding their direction and flying straight "homeward." Since the canyon is 5,000 feet deep, Pigeons would not attain sufficient altitude before turning homeward. They would fly right into a canyon wall and be befuddled.

The Mile High Pigeon Racing Club was not dissuaded by experts or the dismal results of that 1939 race. Almost immediately, the Pigeon Racing Club began to advertise nationally a pigeon race from the bottom of Grand Canyon to Prescott in early May, 1940. Some of the nation's finest homing pigeons entered the race.

Twenty-five pigeons from seven states were taken from Prescott to Phantom Ranch on May 11, 1940. They were released at Phantom the next morning. Most of the pigeons made it back to Prescott. The winner was a pigeon from Topeka, Kansas owned by Sam Crowe! It flew the 125 mile distance including out of the canyon in 3 hours, 27 minutes.

The Phantom Ranch to Prescott pigeon races were even more popular the next year. This time eighty pigeons from twelve states competed. To qualify, the pigeons had to return from the South Rim to Prescott in less than 24 hours. On May 1, 1941, forty-seven pigeons qualified including eleven local birds.

The qualifying pigeons did not get much time to rest. On May 2nd they were taken by car to the South Rim, and on May 3rd four men hiked them down in crates to Phantom Ranch. This must have been done with the cooperation of the Park Service. Can you imagine an encounter these days on the trail between a ranger and four men carrying 47 pigeons into the canyon?

The race began at Phantom at 6:00 the next morning. Wouldn't you know, a storm was brewing over the canyon—not a good day for flying. This time, only 15 pigeons made it back to Prescott. The winner, a California pigeon, required almost two hours more than the previous years winner needing five hours and thirteen minutes to complete the flight.

So what happened to the other 32 pigeons? In stormy weather, the wind

often blows down river. Did the pigeons think, "The heck with Prescott. I'm flying with the wind down river to Vegas? There's lots of statues there to perch on!"

Or, perhaps some of them survived in some hidden side canyon. Occasionally an offspring might appear somewhere in the canyon much to the consternation of the Park Service.

The 1941 race was the last from Phantom Ranch. It took place seven months before Pearl Harbor and World War II. Besides, after the disastrous results of the 1941 race, *The Prescott Courier*, at least, declared, "Grand Canyon Bird Obstacle."

Well, not quite. Just last year two pigeons were released in Bear, Utah and flew 400 miles, including over the Grand Canyon, to Phoenix. The saga continues.

Louis Schellbach's Log Books: Part III

By Traci Wyrick

OVERVIEW : 1943

Abundant rainfall was noted throughout Schellbach's diary during 1943, especiallly in July and August. It was during this year that Schellbach was capturing some of the insects in the Park which would eventually be named after him.

Park employees were on special gas allowances during the war.

Schellbach started writing "Wartime" when referencing the time in his diary. He conducted many lectures for the troops during 1943.

OVERVIEW : First half of 1944

Coming off of the wet and snowy fall of 1943, the winter of 1944 continued the same pattern. Snow was especially heavy in February and continued off and on up to May 16th. Schellbach wrote many times about having to shovel snow and described the Canyon as "invisible" on many days. Heavy showers were the norm for the last part of May. Weather might have been the reason Schellbach wrote so often of eating dinner at the El Tovar with such friends as the Bills, Davis's and Dr. and Mrs. Cox. Driving to Williams or Flagstaff for groceries was either impossible or very risky.

On Jan. 13th, Schellbach was preparing kodachromes of the Nevill's party, taken by H.C. Bryant. He was also busy working on the Grand Canyon Natural History Association's Annual Report, where he was up past midnight on many occasions. Meetings for the Association were often held at his house. Other work included matting and titling slides, making labels, loaning items back and forth with Eddie McKee, taking Spanish classes and making Supai basketry exhibits. Schellbach wrote of hiking down the "Kaibab to Mormon Flats". He had his own personal research library and one project he was working on was what he called the "Glen" Havasupais.

On March 10th, Chief Ranger H. Bill received his draft call notice. The GCNHA gave a party for the Canyon's firefighters in April. April was also a sad time, as Schellbach wrote that "Verkamp has passed away". On May 13th, Lord and Lady Halifax were guests of the Schellbachs, and on June 1st, Schellbach wrote of capturing "one of the smallest butterflies I've ever seen".

The following are the first diary entries I've selected from 1944. I've also listed several more names my Grandfather referenced from this year, and added corrections and/or new information from the Summer 2010 issue of *The Ol' Pioneer*.

~

Wednesday Jan. 5, 1944

Shop and Yav. Servicing stoves and at 10:00 a.m. to Staff meeting until noon. Subject under discussion,

"Grand Canyon Trails" by Supt. H.G. Bryant for consideration of Plans on the Shelf.

P.M. duty at Yavapai. This p.m. had the first reaction to the change in time by the State of Arizona to standard time, while the Santa Fe, Fred Harvey and Park Service operates on Daylight or War time.

At 3:30 p.m. (standard time) 14 persons were at the station and finally a couple asked if I was going to give the lecture at 3:30 p.m. as advertized. I said yes, but it is now 4:30 p.m. (daylight time). Then the group looked at their watches and compared notes and all their watches registered 3:30 while my watch read 4:30—they were traveling and living and making appointments on Standard Time. Had planned to hear the lecture as there were a number from Phoenix and Tucson. Then they recalled the "nasty looks" given them while dinning at the El Tovar Hotel by the waitresses. They thought they had arrived on time and had plenty of time to finish their meal, but the Hotel was operating on an hour later time and they wished to close the dining room.

At 5:15 p.m. (War time) when I was to close Yavapai, there were still people arriving and there were ten making use of the parapet. They still thought they had plenty of time before closing—So we may have complications here on trying to operate on two time basis—Did research on place names in "The Colo. River" by L. Freeman, N.Y. 1923.

~

Saturday Feb. 12, 1944

Lincoln's Birthday. Routine a.m. servicing. Complimentary letter received from Region III Office Director Tillitson complimenting the Grand Canyon Natural History Association's Annual Report for 1943 and the work accomplished and the handling of and investment of funds in War

Bonds. Attended correspondence in a.m.

At home on Feb. 11 & 12 in evening doing research on G.C. Place Names and searching through Almon Harris Thompson's Diary, and Maj. Powell on the Colo. R. exploration 1871 to 1875.

~

Easter Sunday, April 9, 1944

Went on duty 7:30 a.m. (M.S.T.) to Yavapai to open up to public at 8:00 a.m. Sunrise Service and Radio Broadcast conducted. Cold and snow during night. Back to Asst. Supt. Davis home for breakfast with the Bishop, Congressman Murdock, Howard Pyle broadcaster and radio technicians.

Back to Yavapai. Good attendance during day—heavier in the morning however. Canyon occasionally filled with clouds and sky for most part overcast. Dinner at El Tovar with family.

~

Wednesday April 12, 1944

a.m. conducting a group of 36 Chinese Aviator Pilot students through Workshop and Yavapai. P.M. part rain and snow. Evening to El Tovar for dinner with family and then to Community Building to see the Standard Oil Co's movie program on the war. Drove the Davis folks to and from show.

~

Monday, June 5, 1944

Preparing monthly report and on duty at Yavapapi. Attended preparation of entomological specimens in evening. At 11:15 p.m. word over radio quoted the German radio as saying "D" day invasion started on France. News not confirmed.

~

Tuesday June 6th, 1944 "D" Day.

Word this a.m. that the European invasions by the Allies is under way. My day off as relief from duty on Sunday. So hanging close to the radio for minute to minute news on this momentous occasion. News coming in thick and fast.

At 11:30 (War Time) it seems as if invasion is moving according to plan and beach head has been established. May we hold and expand. Our troops are several miles inland on the coast of France, at LaHave. Fighting in the town of Cannes. So far the loss of men has been remarkable light. Paratroops landed behind the strong coastal defenses. We are ready and underway and so far doing very well. Wish I could let myself go and keep writing on this history making event.

New names mentioned in July 9 – Sept. 16 1943 diary entries:

Mrs. Frank Osler - visitor to the Workshop

Mrs. Noordayis—Park visitor?

Mrs. Van Kleek—Park visitor?

Bills—Chief Ranger H. (Harlan) L. "Spud" Bill and wife, Jane. My uncle, Preston Schellbach, comments that Bill replaced Chief Ranger, Art Brown. Bill had a son named Sandy, who went on to attend Wasatch in Utah. Bill moved up quickly in the NPS and was Deputy Director in Washington in the 1970s.

Asst. Supt. Davis—John Davis. My uncle notes that his wife's name

was Marie. They had a daughter named, Ann, and a son named Jack. Marie was a close friend of Schellbach's wife, Ethyl. My Dad, Don Schellbach, remembers another son named Bill.

George Scheck—Canyon resident

Capt. J. Gates Clark—entomologist, US National Museum

People mentioned in first part of 1944 which were not already referred to in Parts I & II:

Almon Harris Thompson—One of the men with John Wesley Powell on his 1872 Colorado River trip

Powell—John Wesley Powell

Bishop-?

Congressman Murdock—"John R. Murdock" Tempe's congressman, served 16 years in House of Representatives and wrote many government and history textbooks used in Arizona schools for years.

Howard Pyle—"John Howard Pyle" Governor of Arizona from 1951 to 1955 and a well-known radio broadcaster who conducted the Easter Service at Grand Canyon for 25 years. He made it so famous that NBC broadcast it nationally.

Other names mentioned in first half of 1944 Diary:

Jack Northrop—photographer out of Prescott. He took most of the photographs of Schellbach in his workshop.

Mrs. Frank Osler

N.R. Garrett—from Prescott, AZ

Ernie Ensor—janitor

Hansons—Mrs. J. Hanson family out of Washington D.C.

Gable—someone Schellbach saw at Headquarters

Cornell—regional architect.

Corrections and/or Additions:

Col. White—a ranger for a short period in the 1920s. He later headed Sequoia National Park.

Dr. McDougal—Naturalist at Death Valley, CA.

Burns—first name is Ned, Museum Chief.

Look for more of Schellbach's diary entries in future issues of *The Ol' Pioneer.*

These Infinities of Beauty and Terror: Poets and Writers Discover the Grand Canyon, Part 2

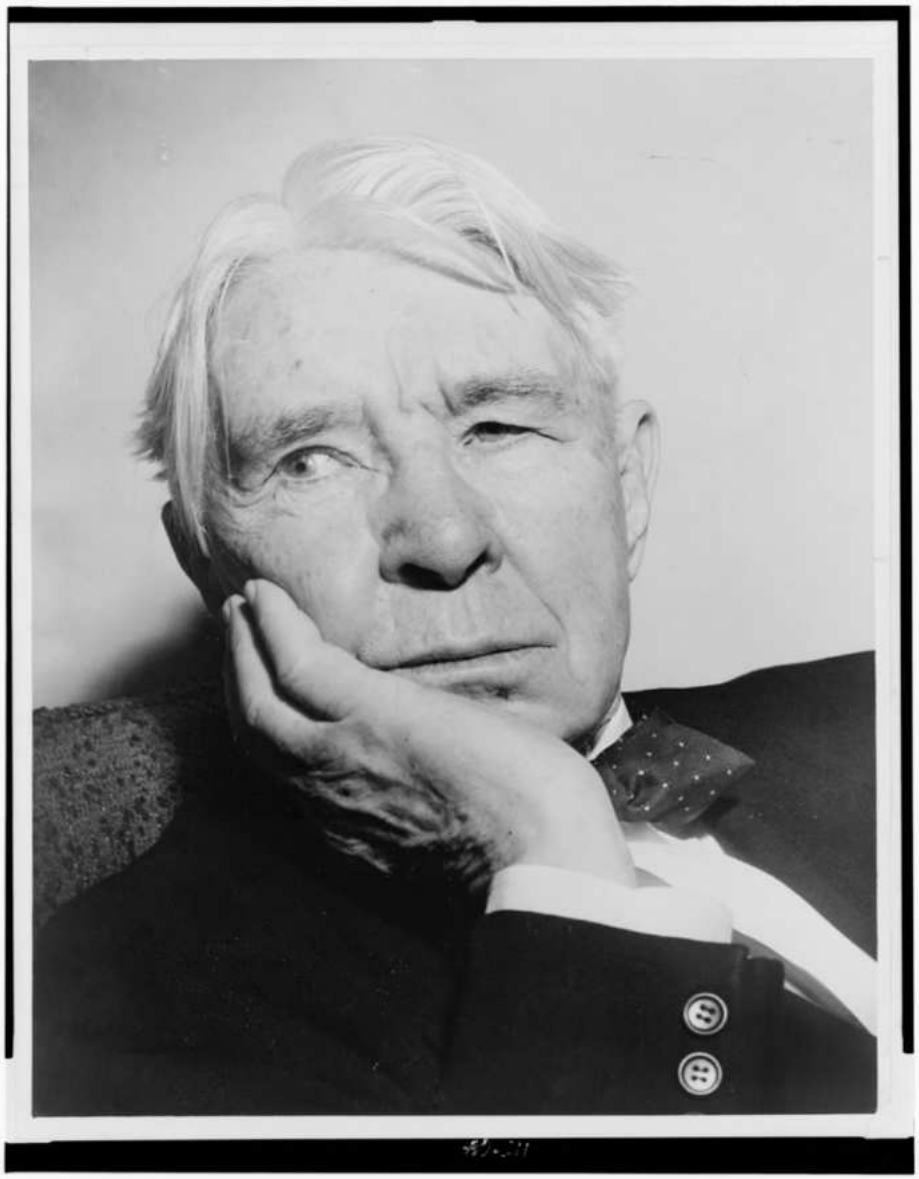
by Don Lago

Harriet Monroe discovered several young poets who went on to major careers, the foremost of whom was Carl Sandburg twice the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. A year after Sandburg's death in 1967, his home became a National Park Service Historic Site, the first time an American writer was so honored. When the National Park Service inventoried Sandburg's possessions, it counted five copies of Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite" and seven pages of yellowed, unused stationary from El Tovar Hotel. Sandburg had written two long Grand Canyon poems, each the final poem of one of his books.

Carl Sandburg modeled himself after Walt Whitman in his free-verse style, his folk voice, and in his writing about the lives of "the People." When Harriet Monroe published her first Sandburg poem, with its first line about Chicago being the "Hog butcher of the world," it was considered a shocking, crude violation of poetic prettiness. As Sandburg celebrated the American people through the national ordeals of the Great Depression and World War Two, he became such an appreciated voice that President Franklin Roosevelt urged him to run for Congress.

In the 1920s Sandburg earned his living as the movie critic for a Chicago newspaper; he was the Siskel and Ebert of his day. Movies were a new art form and Sandburg encouraged their artistic possibilities, but he also appreciated them for showing the pulse of the people. He loved westerns, partly just for their scenery—Sandburg was a nature lover and wrote about it often in his poetry. Of one Zane Grey movie, Sandburg wrote that the scenery "out does every human action in the picture." "Here the deserts and mountains fight. Here the Indian gods had a terrific wrestle one time when the world was congealing out of the mists and putties of chaos. Jagged remnants gesture upward and the deserts pull and wear at them, torture them, century in, century out, to drag the rocks down to dust."[28] Sandburg finally got to see the real west, including the Grand Canyon, on a 1921 train trip to Hollywood, where he interviewed stars like Charlie Chaplin and Will Rogers.

Carl Sandburg begins his Grand Canyon poem, "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," with the image of a train winding its way through Southwestern landscapes: "Stand up, sandstone slabs of red/ Tell the overland passengers who burnt you." The landscape is full of the ghosts of prairie schooners and forty-niners. It's typical of Sandburg to approach the Grand Canyon in the context of American history and human activities. Sandburg describes a donkey rider arriving at the canyon rim. Readers will assume this is a cowboy or tourist, but soon there are signs that this is some Christ-like figure arriving in a Jerusalem of



Carl Sandburg

ultimate realities. The canyon makes the rider's sense of reality waver, and he begins what Harriet Monroe called his "interview with God." The rider recalls his boyhood image of God as a man "with long whiskers in the sky," but "they lied." The canyon implies that God must be much larger than this—if God can be found at all:

How can I taste with my tongue
a tongueless God?
How can I touch with my fingers
a fingerless God?
How can I hear with my ears an
earless God?
Or smell of a God gone noseless
long ago?
Or look on a God who never
needs eyes for looking?[29]

The rider does feel:
The power and lift of the sea
and the flame of the old earth
fires under,
I sift their meanings of sand in
my fingers.
I send out five sleepwalkers to
find out who I am,
my name and number, where I
came from,
and where I am going.[30]

But the sleepwalkers offer
no answer. The rider is left
puzzling on the canyon rim:
I walk the high lash of the frozen
storm line;
I sit down with my feet in a ten-
mile gravel pit.
Here I ask why I am a bag of sea-
water fastened
to a frame of bones put walking
on land…[31]

When Sandburg describes the canyon's shapes, he sees modern, proletarian shapes: "trucks hauling caverns of granite," "somersaults of telescoped railroad train wrecks," "memories of work gangs and wrecking crews," "tumbled skyscrapers and wrecked battleships."

As Sandburg broods about ultimate meanings, he occasionally interrupts the poem and repeats three simple lines that imply that other forms of life skip philosophy and simply go on living:

A bluejay blue
and a gray mouse gray
ran up the canyon walls.

Sandburg can't arrive at any conclusion, and he ends the poem with these ambiguous images:

The worn tired stars say
you shall die early and die dirty.
The clean cold stars say
you shall die late and die clean.

The runaway stars say
you shall never die at all,
never at all.[32]

A few years later Sandburg tried again to wrestle the Grand Canyon for its meanings. H. L. Mencken heard that Sandburg was writing a "high-toned" Grand Canyon prose poem and demanded it for his *American Mercury* magazine. In "Many Hats" Sandburg once again uses the canyon to calibrate the location of God:

The Grand Canyon of Arizona,
said one, this is it, hacked out
by the
broadax of a big left-handed God
and left forgotten, fixed over
and embellished
by a remembering right-handed
God who always comes back.[33]

Sandburg has various "hombres" approach the canyon and see different things. One sees Time, another sees Law and Order. One sees the Garden of Eden, with:

Adam and Eve satisfied and
sitting pretty till the day of the
Snake Dance
and the First Sin; and God was
disgusted and wrecked the
works; he ordered
club-foot angels with broken
wings to shoot the job; now
look at it.

Comes another hombre all
wised up, This was the Devil's
Brickyard; here
were the kilns to make the
Kitchens of Hell; after bricks
enough were
made to last Hell a million
years, the Devil said, "shut 'er
down"; they
had a big payday night and left
it busted from hell to breakfast;
the Hopis
looked it over and decided to
live eighty miles away where
there was water…[34]

This time Sandburg doesn't really expect to find any answer; he is fascinated by the questioning itself. Near the beginning of "Many Hats" he asks, perhaps thinking of Harriet Monroe:

Why did one woman cry, The
silence is
terrible? Why did another smile,
There is sweet gravity here?
Why do
they come and go here and look
as in a looking glass? [35]

Near the end of the poem Sandburg sees:

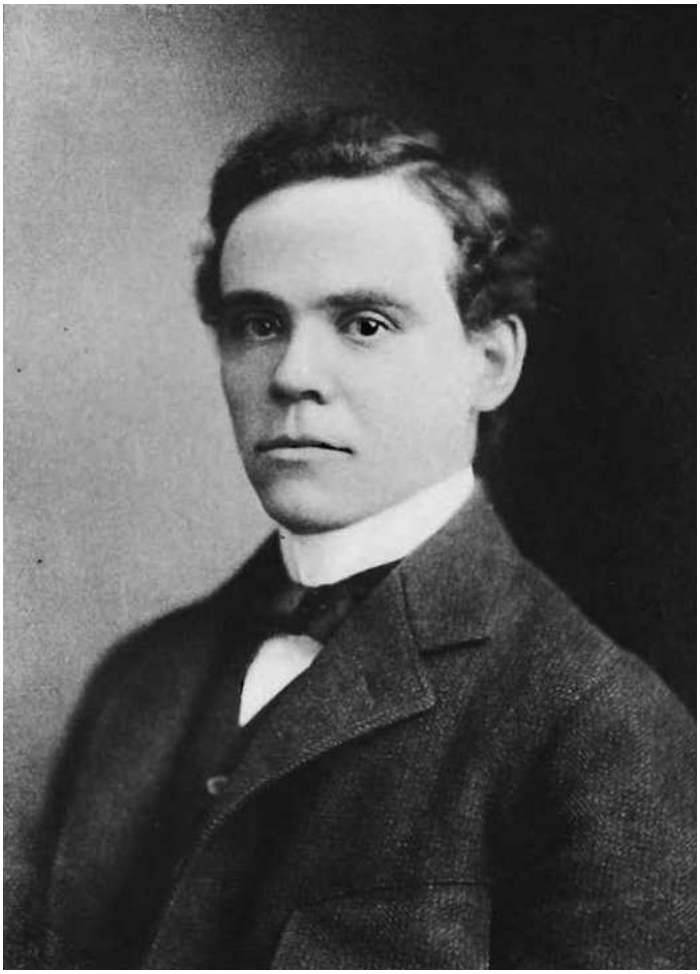
…one man says, There goes God
with an army
Of banners, and another man,
Who is God and why? Who
am I and why? [36]

Yet just as in "Slabs of the Sunburnt West" Sandburg had interrupted his broodings with an image of contented animals, Sandburg frames "Many Hats" at its beginning and ending with the same graceful image of the eternal sunrise:

The drums of the sun never
get tired, and first off
every morning, the drums of
the sun perform an intro-
duction of the dawn here.[37]

Edgar Lee Masters wrote one of the most popular poetry books of the 20th century, *Spoon River Anthology*, a national bestseller in 1915. It consists of 200 dead people speaking from a small-town cemetery, speaking their deepest secrets, regrets, longings, and judgments upon life. *Spoon River Anthology* offered universal human themes, yet it was also an insider's attack against America's nostalgia for the idyllic life of small towns. Edgar Lee Masters grew up in two Illinois small towns, one near the Spoon River, the other on the Sangamon River, about which Masters would one day write a book in the "Rivers of America" series. Masters took an early interest in nature and wrote some of his first poems about it. When Masters read the works of atheist Robert Ingersoll he decided he couldn't believe in a traditional Christian God, and nature became more important to him as a substitute: Emerson's transcendental nature, Shelley's mystical nature, and especially Spinoza's pantheistic nature, in which the cosmos is really just a thought in God's mind. Masters's longing for a better world also made him a Progressive-era political activist and a lawyer defending underdogs and agitators. In 1904 Masters and his law partner Clarence Darrow argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, but the court dismissed their client as "an anarchist."

The success of *Spoon River Anthology* allowed Masters to write full-time, mainly about American history, but his literary reputation shrank steadily, and his financial and personal life were chaotic. His constant philandering ruined two marriages and many friendships. Masters intellectualized his philandering by saying he was searching for the perfect poetic soul, but then he seemed to agree with the Christian case against atheism when he said: "No one knows what nature intends; so we are warranted in following our desires and our reasons, conveniences, tastes, since nature gives us no basis for morality."[38] In the 1930s Masters was living in New York City's Chelsea



Edgar Lee Masters

Hotel, poor, lonely, embittered, and despairing.

Yet Masters was spending summers in the mountains and river valleys of upstate New York, and this rekindled his youthful love of nature and inspired him to write a book of nature poems, *Invisible Landscapes*. The title referred to the mystical depths of nature seen by Shelley and Spinoza, which offered a greater pattern and purpose and peace to human life. In his autobiography Masters said: "…in this year of *Invisible Landscapes*, my brother, the god, has returned to me after a long absence…The country is the haunt of something universal and deathless and infinite which broods upon the earth and reflects itself in it. In communion with nature we can wrest from the gods images identifying life with eternity…"[39]

One of the poems in *Invisible Landscapes* was "The Grand Canyon." Masters had visited the canyon in 1925, and he must have been intrigued by the Southwest, for the next year he traveled to New Mexico to see pueblo villages and ways. Like much of *Invisible Landscapes*, whose metaphysical abstractions limited its sales to only 900 copies, "The Grand Canyon" is opaque reading. But it does seem to triangulate Masters's whole life. In his youth Masters was inspired by the Romantic vision of a spiritual nature. As a writer, especially with *Spoon River Anthology*, Masters became a leader of naturalism, which looked at the world without sentiment, including without religious sentiment, seeing it as a difficult, Darwinian struggle. As an old man Masters was looking back on the wreckage of his life and seeking some kind of redemption. Masters stares into the canyon with a "searching heart," and asks if the universe is nothing but matter in chaos, but then he suggests that the canyon is the emblem of something greater, a great thought with a great order, a Spinozan God who resides in all matter and all flesh:

If this gorge came from that
which is not Love,
Nor Will, nor Vision gazing
many-eyed,
A force alone which pours out
fair, venene
Life as a blind and heedless tide;
And we thrown here are of
Its unconcern, nor planned for,
nor foreseen—
Yet that which awakens thought
is it but thought,
Seeing it taxes man beyond his
power?
That which stirs love is it risen
and wrought
Of flame no brighter than man's
passionate hour?
That which creates, if without
love and blind,
If without thought and without
mind,
Is yet a forehead brooding like
the dawn,
Instinct with genius, inevitable
and swift.
And as the wandering dove, or
songless swan,
Or the bee on summer winds
adrift
Find home again, so That from
which you came,
Great Canyon, by its own
subconscious gift
Shaped what it dreamed: rocks,
flesh, a soul, a flame.[40]

But in the poem's conclusion
Masters retreats from any
conclusion:
Though whence we came and
what we are,
Souls, or but sparkles on the
foam
Of waves whose rolling on is
accident,
Is by this canyon shown not, but
concealed;—
Though on the heart long made
to roam
This beauty, evil or beneficent,
Makes deeper wounds than
those it healed,
The hurt, somehow, finds wings
whose flight is meant
To point the long way home.[41]

Another poet on Harriet Monroe's list of worthy poets was Alfred Noyes, who appeared in *Poetry* in its first year. Noyes was a popular British poet, and during the years Monroe was launching *Poetry*, Noyes was teaching at American universities. While Noyes was at Caltech, one of his students was Frank Capra, who was aiming for a career in engineering. Noyes inspired Capra with the power of language and storytelling, and Capra switched to a career as a filmmaker. Today Capra is most identified with his *It's a Wonderful Life*. Capra sometimes sneaked lines from Noyes's poetry into his films, including what became Capra's personal credo: "There are times in every man's life when he glimpses the eternal," which Capra used in both *Lost Horizon* and *State of the Union*.

Noyes was present when in 1917 astronomer George Hale opened his new 100-inch telescope at Mt. Wilson Observatory, high above the Caltech campus. This was the telescope Edwin Hubble would use to prove that the universe is expanding. Noyes became inspired by the mystery of the universe and by the human quest to understand it, and he began working on a three-book, 800-page epic poem about the progress of science, *The Torch-Bearers*. The first book, *Watchers of the Sky*, begins at Mt. Wilson Observatory and traces the history of astronomy. The second book, *The Book of Earth*, published in 1925, begins and ends at the Grand Canyon, and explores the ideas of geology and biology. Of all the works in which the Grand Canyon plays a role, *The Book of Earth* is the most ambitious work, both artistically and intellectually.

Noyes spends the first twenty-seven pages of *The Book of Earth* at the Grand Canyon. He stares:

Into the dreadful heart of the old
earth dreaming
Like a slaked furnace of her far
beginnings,
The inhuman ages, alien as the
moon,
Aeons unborn, and the
unimagined end.[42]

Alfred Noyes

Noyes spends the day riding along the rim and spends the night in a cabin "upon the monstrous brink." In a section called "Night and the Abyss," Noyes announces his purposes for this book. The abyss is both the Grand Canyon and the spiritual abyss into which many modern people are thrown by the visions of science. Noyes intends to find the true meaning of geological time and forces. But from the start, he makes it clear that in the end he expects to find God:

Below me, only guessed by the slow sound
Of forests, through unfathomable gulfs
Of midnight, vaster, more mysterious now,
Breathed that invisible Presence of deep awe.
Through the wide open window, once, a moth
Beat its dark wings, and flew—out—over that,
Brave little fluttering atheist, unaware
Of aught beyond the reach of his antennae,
Thinking his light quick thoughts; while, under him,
God opened His immeasurable Abyss. [43]

After 300 pages in which Noyes gropes for meaning and explores the worlds of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Leonardo, Linnaeus, Lamarck, Goethe, and Darwin, Noyes concludes that the Book of Earth is really God's scripture written in stone. At the Grand Canyon, by morning, he ends the poem:

Far away
Along the unfathomable abyss it flowed,
A harmony so consummate that it shared
The silence of the sky; a song so deep
That only the still soul could hear it now:
New every morning the creative Word
Moves upon chaos. Yea, our God grows young.
Here, now, the eternal miracle is renewed
Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and earth.[44]

When Harriet Monroe was preparing to launch Poetry magazine, she received lots of advice from Ezra Pound about which poets to include. When Pound needed an example of poets who were too traditional and trite for Poetry, he said: "You don't want the Henry Van Dyke kind."[45]

Henry Van Dyke was the cousin of John C. Van Dyke, the author of *The Desert* and *The Grand Canyon of the Colorado*. Henry Van Dyke was a Presbyterian clergyman and a Princeton English professor whose often-religious poetry was widely popular. In the 1890s he wrote two Christmas stories, *The First Christmas Tree* and *The Other Wise Man*, which are still alive today. In 1906 Henry Van Dyke chaired the committee that wrote the first Presbyterian liturgy,

The Book of Common Worship. In 1914 Henry Van Dyke published *The Grand Canyon and Other Poems*. The title poem, six pages long, begins with a sunrise over the canyon, then offers a standard Romantic image of the canyon as the realm of Titans. But suddenly Van Dyke feels himself to be a tiny human body threatened by vast inhuman dimensions:

How still it is! Dear God, I
hardly dare
To breathe, for fear the
fathomless abyss
Will draw me down into eternal
sleep.[46]

Van Dyke broods over the meaning of the canyon; he considers the possibility that the blind artistry of the Colorado River symbolizes an entire universe ruled not by God but only by force. Van Dyke's existential doubt is just as vivid as that of George Sterling or Edgar Lee Masters. Van Dyke addresses the river:

At sight of thee, thou sullen
laboring slave
Of gravitation,—yellow torrent
poured
From distant mountains by no
will of thine,
Through thrice a hundred
centuries of slow
Fallings and liftings of the crust
of Earth,—
At sight of thee my spirit sinks
and fails.
Art thou alone the Maker? Is the
blind
And thoughtless power that
drew thee dumbly down
To cut this gash across the
layered globe,
The sole creative cause of all I
see?
Are force and matter all? The
rest a dream?

Then is thy gorge a canyon of
despair,
A prison for the soul of man, a
grave
Of all his dearest daring hopes!
The world
Wherein we live and move is
meaningless,

Henry Van Dyke

No spirit here to answer to our
own!
The stars without a guide! The
chance-born Earth
Adrift in space, no Captain on
the ship!...
And man, the latest accident of
Time…
Man is living a lie,—a bitter jest
Upon himself,—a conscious
grain of sand
Lost in a desert of
unconsciousness,
Thirsting for God and mocked
by his own thirst.[47]

Van Dyke's despair may not have been sincere but merely an acknowledgment of the intellectual currents of the time. A moment later, Van Dyke appeals to the canyon to:

Speak to my heart again and set
me free
From all these doubts that
darken earth and heaven!
Who sent thee forth into the
wilderness
To bless and comfort all who see
thy face?
Who clad thee in this more than
royal robe
Of rainbows? Who designed
these jeweled thrones
For thee, and wrought these

glittering palaces?
Who gave thee power upon the soul of man
To lift him up through wonder into joy?
God! let the radiant cliffs bear witness! God,
Let all the shining pillars signal—God!
He only, on the mystic loom of light,
Hath woven webs of loveliness to clothe
His most majestic works…
Now, far beyond all language and all art
In thy wild splendor, Canyon Marvelous,
The secret of thy stillness lies unveiled
In wordless worship! This is holy ground,—
Thou art no grave, no prison, but a shrine,
Garden of Temples filled with Silent Praise,
If God were blind thy Beauty could not be![48]

For all their creativity and soul-searching, the poets had a relatively small audience and a small influence on public perceptions of the Grand Canyon. A far larger influence was worked by the nature writers, especially John Burroughs and John Muir, who were already well-known names, and whose Grand Canyon essays were published in one of the leading magazines of the time, *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*. Burroughs and Muir helped set the tones that were followed by journalists and travel writers, who had the largest audience of all. Burroughs, Muir, and Mary Austin seemed fairly immune to existential despair, and they and John C. Van Dyke helped create the Grand Canyon that today's visitors expect to find: a scene of deep beauty and peace.

John Muir first visited the Grand Canyon in 1896, and on his return in 1902 he wrote his *Century Illustrated* account of it. Muir and Burroughs came to the canyon together in 1909, and Burroughs wrote his account then. By 1909 John Burroughs had been America's leading nature writer for forty years; John Muir had emerged relatively recently with the 1894 publication of *Mountains of California*.

Muir and Burroughs had trained their perceptions and their pens in landscapes that were quite different from the desert Southwest: Burroughs in New York's Catskill Mountains; Muir in the Sierras, with its mighty trees and lush meadows. Both men were nearly the same age, sixty-five in 1902, an age when it isn't easy to adjust one's perceptions. Muir felt out of his element at the Grand Canyon, telling his editor at *Century Illustrated* that writing his canyon article was "the toughest job I ever tackled."[49] Muir puzzled over the desert vegetation, finding the cacti "strange, leafless, old-fashioned plants…making the strangest forests ever seen or dreamed of."[50] Yet at least Muir was accustomed to the raw grandeur of western landscapes. A typical John Burroughs essay would find him amid pleasant pastoral scenery, perhaps bird watching on a farm. When Muir and Burroughs had traveled to Alaska together a decade before their Grand Canyon trip, Muir was openly scornful of Burroughs's inability to get enthralled by rugged landscapes. At the same time that Muir was struggling to write about the Grand Canyon in 1902, the 34-year-old Mary Austin was living in the Mojave Desert just east of the Sierras and writing *Land of Little Rain*, and the 46-year-old John C. Van Dyke had finished writing *The Desert* only seven months before. Both Muir and Burroughs committed the kind of Romantic "frippery" that would make Austin and John C. Van Dyke gag. Yet because the Grand Canyon was such a contrast with the nature familiar to Muir and Burroughs, both men worked conscientiously to come to terms with it, and they brought to this task a greater depth of nature knowledge than did Austin or Van Dyke.

Both Muir and Burroughs begin their accounts with how the canyon surprises people seeing it for the first time, how it defies their past experience or their ability to grasp it. Burroughs relates stories of people overwhelmed by the canyon, including the experiences of Harriet Monroe and Charles Dudley Warner. Burroughs then relates his own vicarious fright: "One's sense of the depths of the cañon is so great that it almost makes one dizzy to see the little birds fly over it, or plunge down into it. One seemed to fear that they, too, would get dizzy and fall to the bottom."[51] Both men express their inability to describe the canyon. Muir: "It is a hard job to sketch it even in scrawniest outline…I cannot tell the hundredth part of the wonders of its features." Burroughs: "Of the many descriptions of it, none seems adequate. To rave over it, or to pour into it a torrent of superlatives, is of little avail." But then, of course, both men set out to describe it.

Both men try to give a sense of the scale of the Grand Canyon by comparing it with other natural wonders. Burroughs: "…Niagara would be only as a picture upon your walls…the pyramids, seen from the rim, would appear only like large tents." Yet John Muir was annoyed by the statements of other authors, starting with Charles Dudley Warner, that Yosemite would disappear in the Grand Canyon, and Muir spent about 300 words defending Yosemite's honor: "None of the sandstone or limestone precipices of the cañon…approaches in smooth, flawless strength and grandeur the granite of El Capitan." But Muir is ready to dismiss other wonders, like Yellowstone, in favor of the canyon.

Both Muir and Burroughs indulge in the Romantic frippery of seeing mythological and architectural shapes in the canyon, "which must play," says Burroughs, "a prominent part in all faithful attempts to describe it." Burroughs sees "truncated towers," "balustrades on the summit of a noble façade," "immense halls," "three enormous chairs," "temples and tombs, pagodas and pyramids, on a scale that no work of human

hands can rival." Muir sees "a huge castle with arched gateway, turrets, watch-towers, ramparts, etc., and to right and left palaces, obelisks, and pyramids fairly fill the gulf, all colossal and all lavishly painted and carved…the prevailing style is ornate Gothic, with many hints of Egyptian and Indian." Muir goes on and on describing "nature's own capital city," with its "fairy embroidery."

John Muir offers a broad survey of canyon phenomena, including geology, wildlife, botany, weather, the river, the trails, the mule rides, the rim roads, Native American ruins, and the canyon's changing appearances through sunrise, sunset, and rain storms.

John Burroughs is mainly interested in the canyon's geology, and, surprisingly, he gives a better feel for geological time and forces than does Muir. Burroughs turns his eastern eyes into an advantage by contrasting east and west: "Erosion, erosion—one sees in the West as never before that the world is shaped by erosion…In the East the earth's wounds are virtually all healed, but in the West they are yet raw and gaping, if not bleeding." Burroughs found it reassuring that the canyon "was not born of the throes and convulsions of nature—of earthquake shock or volcanic explosion. It does not suggest the crush of matter and the wreck of worlds. Clearly it is the work of the more gentle and beneficent forces. This probably accounts for the friendly look." Burroughs was a gentle, friendly man who usually found nature to be friendly.

Both Muir and Burroughs had been raised to fear a severe, vengeful God, and both rebelled and found a grander god in Nature. Earth wasn't a fallen world but the incarnation of divinity. Yet Burroughs was uncomfortable with the outright piety in much of Muir's writings. Burroughs ends his Grand Canyon article with a simple: "…the remainder of our lives will be the richer for having seen the Grand Cañon." Muir was a more lyrical, rhapsodical writer than Burroughs, which is one reason why Muir's writings have endured better. Of the Grand Canyon, Muir glowed:

John Muir and John Burroughs

> It seems a gigantic statement for even nature to make, all in one mighty stone word, apprehended at once like a burst of light, celestial color its natural vesture, coming in glory to mind and heart as to a home prepared for it from the very beginning. Wildness so godful, cosmic, primeval, bestows a new sense of earth's beauty and size. Not even from high mountains does the world seem so wide, so like a star in glory of light on its way through the heavens.

Muir ended by comparing the Grand Canyon to:

> "a grand geological library…And with what wonderful scriptures are their pages filled—myriad forms of successive floras and faunas, lavishly illustrated with colored drawings, carrying us back into the midst of the life of a past infinitely remote. And as we go on and on, studying this old, old life in the light of the life beating warmly about us, we enrich and lengthen our own."

When you crossbreed Muir's Romanticism with the desert realism of John C. Van Dyke and Mary Austin, and later Joseph Wood Krutch and Edward Abbey, you come out with today's perceptions of the Grand Canyon.

Like Harriet Monroe, John C. Van Dyke never had any intention of setting foot in the Southwest, until illness forced him. Van Dyke was a professor of art history at Rutgers and a popular author of books on art, including the Dutch masters. The Dutch, of whom John C. Van Dyke was one, were supposed to be the best at seeing light in all its subtleties. Then in 1897 Van Dyke developed severe asthma, and his doctor exiled him to the desert to recover. Van Dyke was shocked by the desert's lighting, colors, and landforms, which violated every painting and every art theory he'd ever seen. Van Dyke became obsessed with seeing the desert; he took long, solitary trips into it, getting lost and running out of water, risking his health and his life for the sake of beauty.

John C. Van Dyke's background in art history was both his strength and his weakness as a writer. More than anyone else who wrote about the Grand Canyon, Van Dyke was focused on aesthetics, the definitions of natural beauty. Van Dyke wrote long passages describing all the subtleties of scenes and lighting. No one but Van Dyke would worry about the varying red tones of the Supai Formation: "In the early morning when in shadows it is beef-blood red; at noon it is a dark terra-cotta; at sunset almost a fire red."[52] Van Dyke carefully compares the look of one butte with others, or compares Shiva Temple with Mont Blanc. More importantly, Van Dyke tells us why we should accept desert colors and forms as beautiful. Yet Van Dyke's aesthetic eyes also often limited him to seeing landscapes as if they were nothing but paintings, nothing but appearances. The subtitle of Van Dyke's Grand Canyon book is "Recurrent Studies in Impressions and Appearances."

Van Dyke offers quite a bit of geology in his canyon book, but sometimes with the apologetic air of a professor teaching a compulsory class. Van Dykes offers geological facts, observations, and theories, but he mainly seems interested in geology as the painter of his favorite visual effects. Only occasionally does he join Muir and Burroughs in seeing landscapes as but the momentary, ever-changing face of powerful, ancient, ever-flowing geological forces.

There was one thing about the Grand Canyon that inspired Van Dyke into Muir-like poetry. For Van Dyke, the desert is most powerful as a symbol of creation, of eternity, of ultimate mystery, against which all of human history is but a tiny thing. This was the source of Van Dyke's annoyance at humans seeing only their own architectural glories in the Grand Canyon. In his Grand Canyon book Van Dyke is trying to describe the "temples" when he once again flies into exasperation:

> There never was a temple of Shiva or Brahma that lifted five hundred feet or could hold five thousand people, but here we have the carved forms of Nature that reach up nearly seven thousand feet, and, if hollow, might hold a million souls! In all their many centuries of existence they have never heard the footfall or the voice of priest or worshiper, or had any association with humanity. How easily, securely, undeviatingly from the perpendicular they have stood through the ages, while the Indian temples have been falling away stone by stone, crumbling under their own weight, flattening into their own dust!
>
> The pyramid of Cheops at Gizeh was the labor of thousands of slaves over many years. When the capstone was put on the top, the height reached was four hundred and eighty-two feet. But here at the Canyon the so-called Cheops Pyramid was the labor of Nature over thousands of centuries, and today, after ages of erosion, it still lifts skyward over five thousand feet. Perhaps the first marauder who broke into the tomb in the heart of the Gizeh Pyramid was brought to a standstill by seeing in the dust of the floor a naked footprint—the footprint of the last attendant who had gone out and sealed the door behind him five thousand years before; but here in the under-strata of the Canyon Pyramid are the sand-ripples left by the waves of a primal sea perhaps five million years ago. You can almost see to a nicety just where the last wave broke. These are the footprints of Creation, beside which those of the human seem so small and so inconsequential.[53]

Throughout his book, Van Dyke takes jabs at the Romantic fancies other writers were inflicting on the canyon, such as portraying the river by moonlight as "an angel's pathway."

Even after decades of familiarity with the Southwest, Van Dyke is spooked by his journeys to the canyon bottom: "One cannot imagine anything more uncanny than these inner Canyon walls."[54] "…they are almost too creepy for enjoyment. They are grim and unearthly."[55] "Wind and storm and lightning are an old story, but the mad plunge of a canyoned river is something unique."[56]

While John C. Van Dyke saw the landscape mainly in aesthetic terms, Mary Austin saw it through its human stories, through the eyes and history of the people who lived there and knew it best, the eyes of sheepherders or Native Americans. Yet soon after writing *Land of Little Rain*, Austin followed George Sterling to Carmel and became one of the leaders of the Carmel arts colony, and this increasingly led her away from nature and into social issues and cultural trends, then to New York and Europe. After a dozen years of living in New York City, Mary Austin felt lost and sought to reconnect with her literary and spiritual roots. She explored Arizona and New Mexico, including the Grand Canyon in 1923, wrote

Land of Journeys' Ending about them, and settled in Santa Fe for the rest of her life. Austin immersed herself in Native American culture and religion. Harriet Monroe published Austin's renderings of Southwestern tribal songs.

Austin described the Grand Canyon more accurately than most writers, yet she also came up with some vivid poetic images: "The dawn came up, as it does in the Navajo country, a turquoise horse, neighing joyously."[57] In her poem "The Grand Cañon," Austin imagined that all the world's beautiful sky colors ended up in geologized form in the canyon:

Now I know what becomes
Of the many-colored days,
Rose red evenings,
Red mornings…
They are on their way to the
Grand Cañon.
There they lie, overlapping
In motionless unreality.[58]

Yet Austin wasn't being fanciful, she was stating her personal spirituality, when in Land of Journeys' Ending she saw Native American spirits in Grand Canyon clouds: "I am not sure that the other tourists saw anything but the changing configuration of the cliff through the cloud-drift, but that was their misfortune. It is only as they please that Those Above show themselves in the rainbow…or the moonbow…"[59]

Austin was ahead of other Grand Canyon authors in being a serious student of Native American culture. Native American connections with the land have become another element in today's perceptions of the Grand Canyon and the Southwest.

Mary Austin

The last word in this article goes to John C. Van Dyke, but only because he realized there would be no last word about the Grand Canyon. At the end of his book Van Dyke passed judgment upon canyon writings:

> Many a poet has come away from the Canyon with a fine frenzy in his eye and a thick feeling in his throat, but by the time he has his emotion down on paper it has proved merely a disjointed rhapsody. You cannot absorb the Canyon mentally and body it forth in verse as you do the New England mill-pond or the poppies in Flanders fields. The mass of form and color, the bewildering display of light, are baffling. For all the verseful eulogies and rhythmic odes, the beauty of the depth remains unrevealed, its splendor not half told. The Canyon still lacks a poet. [60]

Sorry, cousin Henry Van Dyke, this includes you. It also, John C. Van Dyke confessed, included himself.

Writers have continued coming to the Grand Canyon for over a century, and each one has seen the canyon differently. The canyon has been a Rorschach ink blot onto which people have projected their own personalities, needs, philosophies, and literary styles. As Carl Sandburg put it in "Many Hats":

For each man see him-
self in the Grand Canyon—
each one makes his own Canyon
before he comes, each one brings
and carries away his own
Canyon…[61]

Poets have come and gone, generations have come and gone, trendy styles and philosophical urgencies have come and gone. The Grand Canyon never noticed. The Grand Canyon endures.

Endnotes:

[28] Carl Sandburg, review of "The Vanishing American," 1926. *The Movies Are: Carl*

Grand Canyon Historical Society
PO Box 31405
Flagstaff, AZ 86003-1405

Sandburg's Film Reviews and Essays, 1920-1928 edited by Arne Bernstein (Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 2000) p 301.

[29] Carl Sandburg, "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," *Collected Poems*, p 310.

[30] Ibid, p 311.

[31] Ibid, p 312.

[32] Ibid, p 314.

[33] Carl Sandburg, "Many Hats," *Collected Poems*, p 430.

[34] Ibid, p 432.

[35] Ibid, p 430.

[36] Ibid, p 434.

[37] Ibid, p 435.

[38] Edgar Lee Masters, letter to Edwina Babock, Jan. 7, 1925, Masters papers at Princeton University Library, Princeton, N. J.

[39] Edgar Lee Masters, *Across Spoon River* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1936) p 414-416.

[40] Edgar Lee Masters, *Invisible Landscapes* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1935) p 96.

[41] Ibid, p 97.

[42] Alfred Noyes, *The Book of Earth* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925) p 2.

[43] Ibid, p 11.

[44] Ibid, p 328.

[45] Quoted in Harriet Monroe, *A Poet's Life*, p 265.

[46] Henry Van Dyke, *The Grand Canyon and Other Poems* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914) p 5.

[47] Ibid, p 6.

[48] Ibid, p 7-8.

[49] Quoted in Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) p 376.

[50] This and following Muir quotes are from John Muir, "The Grand Canyon of the Colorado," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, November, 1902, p 107-116.

[51] This and following Burroughs quotes are from John Burroughs, "The Grand Canyon of the Colorado," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, January 1911, p 425-438.

[52] John C. Van Dyke, op cit., p 60.

[53] Ibid, p 81-82.

[54] Ibid, p 72.

[55] Ibid, p 73.

[56] Ibid, p 132.

[57] Mary Austin, op cit., p 425.

[58] Mary Austin, *The Children Sing in the Far West* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928) p 70.

[59] Austin, *Land of Journeys' Ending*, p 425.

[60] John C. Van Dyke, op cit., p 216-7.

[61] Carl Sandburg, "Many Hats," *Complete Poems*, p.434.

Spread the Word — Join the Grand Canyon Historical Society!

Membership in the Grand Canyon Historical Society has its benefits:

- Annual subscription to the tri-annual magazine *The Ol' Pioneer*.
- Annual subscription to the quarterly newsletter *The Bulletin*.
- Discount on all GCHS publications.
- Free admission to all GCHS programs and outings, including an annual picnic on the edge of the Canyon.
- Participation in the annual GCHS membership meeting and the election of Board Members.

Membership is $20 per year ($25 outside U.S.). To become a member print out the online application at grandcanyonhistory.org or write down your name, address, phone number and email address and send it with your check to the Grand Canyon Historical Society at PO Box 31405, Flagstaff, AZ 86003-1405.