



# PIONEERS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## TRANS-CANYON HIKER

by Gail Burak 11/13/91

I believe it was 1981 when a rather heavy set woman with a pack on her pack and a shovel sticking straight up the back of her hat. It was a big straw hat. She had to bend the back straight up so the shovel would stand up--looked like an eagle feather at first when I saw her. She was heading down the trail towards Phantom. She didn't have a permit to stay at Cottonwood. I couldn't help wonder about this shovel--what'd she need that for. In one hand she had a big bucket. It seemed that she was planning a trip from Whitmore Canyon in the west all the way to Lee's Ferry the following April and she was leaving her caches. She had left them along the line to the west and was heading for Clear Creek to leave one over there and then she'd go back up the same way she came down the North Kaibab trail and take her truck and go on over to north canyon and go down again and leave some more.

She got down there two days later. I saw this rather gray-faced person dragging in, still with the shovel sticking out of the back of her pack, but she obviously wasn't feeling very well. It seemed that she had a very bad case of diarrhea and she was just dragging every step of the way. She'd remembered that I was there and had been looking kind when she saw me first, so she thought maybe I'd let her stay there the night. She stayed there for three days. I fed her rice water and soup--chicken soup--like you are supposed to and had to straighten her out. The

poor thing had only brought her nuts and seeds and food cache type of food with her and none of that was helping her situation up to that point.

I made a friend on the spot obviously. She was a wonderful person. A very gregarious, outspoken--a person who turned out to have been a coal truck driver, worked in coal mines, had done all kinds of mechanical work and so on. She looked built for it too. The following year--we had been in touch during the year--during the winter--and the following year was the year she was supposed to be going down. I came back to the canyon from my winter in Mexico with my husband in March and I was staying at the Aikins with a friend of mine, Barbara Oxner because the Aikins were all down at Roaring Springs at that point. One morning I woke up and here is...what looked like a man getting out of bed right in back of the Aikin's trailer which was then, as it is now, on the site

of the old Kolb house. It was a different trailer than they have now. And I said, "Barbara, look out the window...he's brushing his teeth out there...he's rolling up his bedroll out there." "He" turned around ...and it was my friend Shirley Haycock from the year before. It seems that she was a little late getting started but I had told her that I was coming to the canyon and she had walked across the canyon the night before, got up there about midnight and decided that she didn't want to wake us. She knew where I was staying, so she just rolled out her bedroll there beside the trailer and went to sleep. The upshot was that Barbara, Shirley and I all rode in my van around to the North Rim so that we could see where she was--she had already started her hike. She had gotten away early. It was a hot March so she had had some problems and had to be rescued at Jump-up Canyon ...somewhere in through there...Hat Canyon is down there somewhere--way to the west. She had left her truck somewhere out beyond Crazy Jug Point and there was where she was going to start down. But she had a couple of days and she figured she'd stay up on the Rim with us and we went out to North Canyon--camped one night, hiked down to the buffalo ranch area on what would be the plateau equivalent on the North Rim side. Then we drove up through Big Spring where I had a couple of friends who were working out there that summer and went out to Crazy Jug and camped

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out on the rim. That was a gorgeous spot--I really loved it. The Cliff Rose was all in blossom, it was clear and lovely. I saw angles of the Canyon I'd never seen before. She could look down and show me where she had hiked and come up. And that's where we left her. So now Shirley and I are good friends. She has worked at the Arches as I have since then. She did get all the way to Lee's Ferry. She ran into some adventures along the way, but made it nicely.

One adventure she had was when she came out at Buffalo Ranch to where she would have to hike out the next day to get to her truck. Buffalo Ranch itself is down on the lower plateau--she had to get up high on the North Rim level to get her vehicle. But she found where this buffalo fence was and there were troughs there for them to drink from and they have somebody come and check on them periodically -- maybe feed them as well. There was a little shed there with a cot outside which had no mattress on it--so she just put her bedroll down on the springs and thought it was more comfortable than what she'd been having to that point. In the morning she was awakened by a sound--it sounded like drumming. She looked over and here was a big old bull buffalo. He'd been at the trough--his jowls were still dripping a bit. But he was hopping up and down on all four feet. She thought that was real funny. So she thought, "well if he can do it, I can do it." So she got up on all fours on her bed and started to bounce around on the springs and the buffalo bounced around and snorted a bit and then wondered off. She learned later that that was his way of courtship!

Gale Burak 11/13/91

## SOURDOUGH SPONGE

By Gale Burak

1 Cup sour dough starter (If it is moldy do not use. There is no way to rescue it -- throw it out.)

STIR to mix

1 Cup lukewarm water

1 1/4 Cup white flour

MIX together until it slides off spoon easily, it will be lumpy.

**DO NOT USE METAL BOWL UNLESS IT IS STAINLESS STEEL USE ONLY GLASS, PLASTIC OR CROCKERY**

Let set two hours or until it forms large bubbles. Take out one cup for Muffins, return balance to crockery container. It is not necessary to refrigerate if it is to be used within a week or so, otherwise DO refrigerate. Keep covered but not sealed.

## SOURDOUGH ENGLISH MUFFINS

1 Cup sourdough taken from sponge recipe

2 Cups milk, or 1 egg plus enough milk to make 2 cups. May substitute buttermilk

4 Cups flour. This may be composed of 3 cups white flour and 1 cup whole wheat, cornmeal or oatmeal, etc.

2 Tbs. honey with the milk

Let set overnight covered with cloth or until doubled in size

STIR DOWN

ADD 1 1/2 tsp salt and 1 tsp soda mixed with 1 cup white flour

ADD 1 cup raisins, sunflower seeds, or chopped dried fruit if you like.

STIR until blended thoroughly. It will be very thick. Turn out onto board and knead until it squeaks adding flour on board as needed.

DIVIDE into two balls and form like jelly roll about 12" long and 1 1/2" thick, cut into 3/4" pieces (12 slices to a roll).

COVER cookie sheet lightly with cornmeal. Place rounds onto it. Sprinkle with cornmeal. Let rest covered for 1/2 hour. Follow same procedure for 2nd ball.

GRILL on top of stove in ungreased frying pan or griddle that can be covered. Allow 5 - 6 minutes for first side or until it lightly bubbles.

TURN, cook 4 - 5 minutes until brown. Cool on rack. Do not use until cold.

SPLIT and put into toaster and spread with butter or your favorite jelly. Can be split and grilled on top of stove.

Luscious!

Gale Burak's recipe will be added, with others we have been putting in the newsletters, to the next GCPS cookbook. We are looking for more recipes to add so please, send us yours!

## ALL ABOARD

It was the Williams Flier and not the Chattanooga Choo Choo or the Wabash Cannon Ball that rounded the bend into the Grand Canyon National Park on December fourteenth. Coach "D" brought up the rear with sixteen members and visitors of the Grand Canyon Pioneers on board heading to the Canyon for a bit of fun and learning. It is still a question if Al Richmond or the railroad personnel put us all in a corner at the rear of the last car. since the group had made the trip previously, it was possibly the latter because they knew we were a rowdy bunch. We thought we were behaving properly until the conductor passed and told Al he would have to control his group -- and wouldn't you know? Al denied he even knew us or had a group.

The Grand Canyon Station, while not the most popular place to have a picnic lunch, served as a dining room on our arrival. The war sun and a lone picnic table enticed us to break out our box lunches and devour Sibyl's 'sinful cookies' and whatever other vittles each of us brought. Then so full we could hardly waddle up the steps in front of the El Tovar we wandered over to Verkamp's store.

The fire in the big fireplace felt good while we listened to Mike Verkamp and his son, Ken tell us the history of the store. It was the first time most of us had been to the second floor to see what had been the Verkamp family's living quarters. The porch roof was the most impressive part of the tour. It not only gave a different perspective of the area around the Canyon but permitted us an insight on how the early residents conserved water.

Before the National park Service pumped water from Roaring Springs to the South Rim, the commodity was a special treat. When Jack Verkamp designed the building in 1914 he built the roof of the porch to collect rain and melted snow that ran off into a cistern. While the idea was ingenious at the time, Mike declares it is now a pain and makes more work for him. With ample water available the cistern is no longer in use and he has to shovel the snow and watch out for ice.

After the tour of Verkamp's I entertained the members with more history of the Canyon. Since I had expounded on Kolb so often I chose to give a walking tour along the rim telling about Ralph Cameron and a few of the old timers who lived and worked there around the turn of the century. As we walked along I pointed out a few landmarks that many are unaware exist: Emery Kolb's first darkroom, the location of his first tent studio and the old Cameron Hotel were among those.

While we toured the Bright Angel Lodge, we took time to call Gale Burak at Phantom Ranch. We caught her during a break between talks. She is in her element at the bottom of the Canyon talking about everything from geology to flowers and the river itself.

Everyone quieted down on the return trip to Williams -- the conductor only frowned and looked apprehensive as he passed by. He probably wondered if it was a lull before the storm. Actually, all of us were too tired to cause much trouble, then on the other hand maybe it was because Sibyl had bribed him with her cookies. Bill Suran



Friends and members taking part in our Grand Canyon Railway field trip on December 14, 1991 were: Sibyl Suran (with cookies), Bill Suran, Mike Gibson, Nancy Remke Gibson, Diane Van Cleave, Doug Van Cleave, Marie Maiorana, Paul Maiorana, Don Lyngholm, Al Richmond, Ron Werhan, Carol Furey-Werhan, Esther Meyer, Timothy Van Cleave, Mike Arthur, and Jim Van Cleave.



## John George Verkamp A Memorial

No one can remain long in northern Arizona without hearing of John Verkamp, dean of Arizona curio dealers and a pioneer in the development of the Grand Canyon of Arizona as a tourist mecca visited by millions annually. When he died on April 4, 1944, at the comparatively early age of 67, John George Verkamp left behind him a rich legacy, bequeathing much more than the thriving souvenir business he established at the Grand Canyon in 1898. For he passed along to his survivors the same qualities he himself had inherited from his father, Gerard Verkamp, who rose from a poor Dutch immigrant boy to one of Cincinnati's most successful merchants in true American "boot strap" tradition, and at the time of his death had reared a family of 11 children, installing in each Old World as well as New World virtues.

John George Verkamp was born in Cincinnati on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1877. On a trip west at the age of 18 he saw for the first time the breath-taking spectacle of the Grand Canyon as he stood in awe on the South Rim, and realized that sooner or later the automobile would come into its own as a mode of travel, bringing millions of visitors to the sight every year, to mingle with those coming by train. Returning to his home in Cincinnati and his studies at St Xavier Jesuit College, he thought of little else than settling permanently in the bustling lumber town of Flagstaff, so he'd be in the most advantageous position possible when the propitious time came. Thus, his studies completed and with only the proverbial shoestring with which to launch himself in the business world, the young bachelor set out again for Flagstaff on his own. At that time the tourist business was just beginning to develop in Arizona, and the first automobile trip was made to the Grand Canyon. Yet travel to the Canyon was still difficult due to poor roads that made travel by automobile slow and tiresome.

John Verkamp had faith, however, in his conviction that once the travel problem was overcome, the world would beat a path to the Canyon and in the process would find its way, as well, to the door of anyone foresighted enough to open a shop there for the souvenir-minded tourist. So it was that in 1898 John arrived at the Grand Canyon loaded down with curios he had collected from here, there and everywhere, and set up his shop in one of the tent rooms of the Bright Angel Lodge according to the plan that had begun to take shape in his mind four years earlier. Once the business was established, young Verkamp began thinking about expansion, but like any hard-headed businessman, he decided to investigate carefully before investing any more money. So in 1902 he made a special trip -- by auto -- to consult with automobile manufacturers in the East, to learn for himself whether auto travel would become a popular and economical mode of transportation for tourists. When he was satisfied in his own mind that the automobile was here to stay and Old Dobbin had seen his day (despite jeering advice to "get a horse!") young Verkamp returned to the Canyon and constructed the building on the South Rim which still houses Verkamp's curio store. He did all he could, besides, to encourage the Coconino Board of Supervisors to appropriate funds for better roads to the Canyon.

Seventeen years later -- in 1919 -- the Grand Canyon was made a National Park by Act of Congress, and Arizona is known today as the Grand Canyon State. The Canyon itself is reputedly one of the "Seven Wonders of the Modern World" -- because pioneers like Mr. and Mrs John George Verkamp had faith in the future of their adopted state plus the courage of their convictions. The Verkamps were married on May 1, 1912. Mrs. Verkamp is the former Catherine Wolfe.

Although the couple lived in Flagstaff, Mr. Verkamp continued to own his store at Grand Canyon but had someone else operate it for him on an incentive basis. As he predicted, the automobile did indeed replace Old Dobbin and better roads were built to the Canyon. The business flourished in proportion to the rapid increase in travel to the Canyon. In 1936 the Verkamps moved from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon, where the store was operated by Mr. Verkamp with the help of his devoted wife. The couple lived at Grand Canyon until Mr. Verkamp's untimely death April 4, 1944. Surviving besides Mrs. Verkamp are three daughters, Peggy, Janet and Catherine, and a son, John Jr. (Jack). Also there are 12 grandchildren. During his 40 years in the Grand Canyon State, Verkamp was active in affairs of the Elks and the Knights of Columbus, and whenever he could find some free time from the pressure of business, he liked nothing better than to go fishing or hunting with some of his cronies.

No biography of John George Verkamp would be complete without at least brief mention of his brother, Frederick Verkamp, two years his junior. Like his brother, Leo Frederick Verkamp was educated at St. Xavier Jesuit College in Cincinnati and came west as a young man about the same time as his older brother. When only 25 Leo Frederick Verkamp was elected mayor of Flagstaff by a large majority, to become youngest mayor in the city's fabulous history, and he also served many years as chairman of the Coconino County Republican Central Committee. Later he became secretary of the Hart Cattle Co. and the Tyler Sheep Co. and financial advisor to such other Flagstaff firms as Babbitt Brothers and the Flagstaff Lumber Co. It is no wonder the name Verkamp has such a familiar ring to anyone who has ever visited northern Arizona and the Grand Canyon.

# LETTERS

Northern Arizona University  
Office of the President

Memorandum

To: Albert Richmond, Research Specialist  
Center for the Colorado Plateau Studies

From: Eugene M. Hughes, President

Date: December 4, 1991

Subject: Your Note and Attached Information

Thank you for sending the newsletter. I really found it interesting, especially the letter from Adeline Cooley Halversen. She must be a character. I certainly appreciate learning about the scholarship. I know that the Society is struggling to make ends meet, so we are especially appreciative of the generous contribution from the Turnbuls which made the scholarship possible. I have written them to express my appreciation for their support.

I wish you and your colleagues in the GCPS continued success. Please express my gratitude to the membership when you meet again.

Northern Arizona University  
Office of the President  
December 4, 1991

Mr. & Mrs. John A. Turnbull, Sr.  
13216 South Hansworth Avenue  
Hawthorne, CA 90250-4924

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Turnbull:

It was with pleasure that I learned of your generous contribution of \$250 to the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society to support a scholarship for a student at NAU who wanted to pursue research involving history of historical preservation in the Grand Canyon area.

Your generous contribution indeed will assist a deserving student who wishes to pursue research consistent with the guidelines you have established.

I hope that the next time you visit Flagstaff, you'll be able to spend more time and visit NAU. I think you will be pleasantly surprised at the expanded efforts we are making in developing what we hope will become the nation's strongest collection of Grand Canyon information. The NAU Center for Colorado Plateau Studies is involved in some intense efforts throughout the region. I am confident you would enjoy learning more about what that group of scholars is doing.

Again, I thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,  
Eugene M. Hughes  
President

\* \* \* \* \*

Christmas cards and good wishes received from:  
The Schicks, Fred & Jeanne  
Buford and Myra Mae Belgard  
Gale Burack (from Phantom Ranch)  
Ranger Gerry Ray

## No dues -- No news!!

Notes from the secretary:

Dues are due. No dues -- no news! This will be your last issue of the newsletter unless dues for 1992 are paid up.

Two members have converted their annual to life family memberships. Thanks for your faith in the Society's goals and projects go out to: **Jim & Viola Shirley**, and **Eldon & Maxine Roth**.

Due to his appointment as United States Magistrate Judge, **Steve Verkamp** had to resign as our statutory agent to avoid any possible conflict of interest. In order to complete the annual Corporation Commission filing on time, I will act as the Society's agent for the remainder of this year. We will find someone willing to serve as agent during our annual meeting.

Although Steve has to step down, he remains as one of our valued members. We owe him many thanks for the years of service and good advice.





## Interview with Jack Verkamp during outing to Anita mines.

**Jack Verkamp:** Dad had an ore sample from the Last Chance Mine. It wasn't free copper but it was really rich. We had it on display on the front porch for years and years. Finally somebody walked off with it.

**Ron:** Is that right? **J:** Yeah. It weighed about 125 pounds.

**R:** How long ago was that? **J:** Shoot we lost that probably about 10 or 15 years ago. I mean it's too heavy to take it in at night and lock it up--125-150 pounds.

**R:** Maybe that's what I remember seeing on the porch. Didn't you have a meteorite too? **J:** Oh we still got that., it's not on the porch now. It got stolen a couple of times. We got it chained down now.

**R:** Yeah, probably high school kids **J:** Yeah -- pranksters more or less.

**R:** Tell me about the Grandview Mine. **J:** I don't know much about it. really.

**R:** Wasn't Hearst -- the newspaper Hearst ...wasn't he involved with it at one time? **J:** Yeah, as a matter of fact I think he owned that. I don't know what the acreage was but he...what we know now as Grandview Point.

**R:** Yeah. It's hard to believe they got burros with packs and stuff in and out of there. Seems like it's straight up and down in some places. **J:** Yeah

**R:** Tell me about the artist Louis Akin. How did you come to have that painting? **J:** Well he and my Dad were pretty good friends. They used to do a lot of bird hunting together, you know. Down at Mormon Lake and Lake Mary. Hunting ducks and all that jazz. He did that canvas in Flagstaff in an old room in that old Babbitts Store. He did it from sketches that he'd made up here at the Canyon. And they were real good friends. And my Dad got it through his estate. He died, I believe 1913. That's how we happened to have it.

**R:** I ran across him only by reading Bruce Babbitts' book. Kind of an interesting book that he put together. **J:** Yeah, I got one real nice souvenir. It's an original oil. It's a Mormon Lake scene. Akin had painted that and my dad walked in one morning to see him and he says, well Johnny, what do you think of that? My Dad was admiring it you know...and all this and that.. He said, "don't you like the particular detail of it? So he goes up and looks at it. Down in the corner he had inscribed to JGV from LA. and the date...1912 I think.

**R:** That's really nice. **J:** So I have that. in the house.

**R:** When did the Verkamps move to the Canyon? **J:** My Dad moved the family up here in 1936. **R:** Oh is that right? You lived in Flag before then? **J:** Yeah. That's where we were raised. Graduated from Flag High.

**R:** Oh you did? Did you go to Emerson School? **J:** No, I went to Saint Anthony's. I think they call it St. Mary's now. That was a great school..

**R:** Have you been to town lately? Have you seen what happened to Emerson School? It's all gone. **J:** Yeah, it's all gone. I had a lot of good friends went to school there you know.

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