



# PIONEERS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Number 1

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## THE GRAND CANYON PIONEERS COME OF AGE

Those who organized the Canyon Pioneers Society never intended it to be a social club. Though the members always had a good time and enjoyed each other's company they had a goal to learn and study the history of the area. Now, at last we have come to the point where we are doing constructive things.

During the annual meeting last October the organization voted to establish the "Grand Canyon Pioneers Society Scholarship Fund" as a means to further the study of the history of the Grand Canyon. The society awarded the first of the scholarship in March to **Michael F. Anderson** to study the trails and do research on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Upon receiving the award Mike wrote the following: "...A great big thank you to the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society for the \$250 scholarship to do research on the North Rim.

The money will be put to good use! I will greatly appreciate the names and numbers of anyone the society might know of who would be willing to talk about activities along Thunder River Trail. I will make time for any oral interviews that can be had. Sincerely, **Mike Anderson.**"

Congratulations Mike. Can anyone help?

During the past year other things have brought the society closer to its original goal. The presentation of the **Metzger papers and photographs** to the Special Collections Library at Northern Arizona University added to the preservation of historical documents of the Grand Canyon. Researchers owe the Society and **John A Turnbull** their thanks for these papers.

Included in the Metzger papers, but not part of those John gave, were papers **Art Metzger** saved that belonged to **Ralph Cameron**. These

date back to the 1890's. Metzger left these to **Jeanne Schick** who in turn presented them to the society. The collection is completely inventoried and now on file at the library and ready for use.

The latest endeavor and one still in process is the recording of the early Mormon pioneers' names inscribed on the cliffs of House Rock Valley. This project kept nineteen human and four canine members busy Saturday and Sunday April 25 and 26. There are hundreds of names carved here by the early travelers as they passed through during the nineteenth century that members surveyed, copied and photographed. More about that elsewhere in this newsletter.

It should make you feel good to know that your society is helping to further research and preserve the history of the Grand Canyon area.

*Bill Suran*

### OLD TIMERS' REUNION

It's that time again. The **Grand Canyon Old Timers' Reunion** will be held again this year September 25-27 at the Grand Canyon Squire Inn. The attendance in 1991 was the largest ever and **Jeanne Schick** wants this one to top 'em all. If you have not received your registration form get in touch with **Jeanne Schick**, P.O. Box 127 Sedona, AZ 86336 or **Valerie Shortlidge** at Grand Canyon Squire Inn P.O. Box 130 Grand Canyon, AZ 86023-0130, (602) 638-2681.

**They need your registration by August 30, 1992.**

### NEXT OUTING

For our next get-together and outing we have chosen a picnic visit to Hull Cabin on June 6, 1992. We should all meet at Moqui Lodge about 10:00 AM and travel together from there. Bring picnic lunch, drinks and possibly something to share with other members.

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## AN OUTING TO GLEN CANYON DAM FEBRUARY 22

We worked on short notice in February and ran out of time before we could get a newsletter out to everyone and for this we apologize. We had an invitation to tour the Glen Canyon Dam on February 22 and took **Jeff Waite** up on his offer. Even with only a few days notice we had a good attendance. Those who ventured up to Page for the occasion were: **Al Richmond, Karen Richmond, Val Avery, Mike and Nancy Gibson, Ron Werhan, Carol Furey-Werhan, Matt and Robyn Werhan, Fred and Jeanne Schick, Bill and Sibyl Suran, and Mike Merritt.**

We had a picnic lunch at a shelter on Beer Can Hill overlooking Lake Powell and then met **Jeff Waite, Chief Controller** of the Glen Canyon Dam for a tour you wouldn't believe. After completing the route taken by all tourists we donned hardhats and went below - and that means all the way to the bottom of the Colorado River. Jeff literally walked us through one of the huge turbines that at the time was under repair.

Afterwards the members present voted to send Jeff a check for \$100 as a thank you for his time and knowledge. Jeff responded in a letter which read in part: "... Many thanks for the nice letters and for bringing your fellow Society members up to tour the Glen Canyon Dam. The nice letters and check from the Society were appreciated very much. I am actually speechless. I enjoyed meeting everyone and it's not often I give a tour to a group who seemed to really want to learn about the operations of the dam and its impact on the environment and the way we live. The thanks go to you.

### A DAM STORY

If I mentioned that the members of the Grand Canyon Pioneers Society spent a half hour under the Colorado River Saturday February 22, you would think the man in the white coat had

better be on his way. But I swear it was true. The group took a tour of the Glen Canyon Dam on that date through the courtesy of **Jeff Waite**, chief operator of the dam. Jeff claimed he was not a guide but he did a wonderful job of explaining the operation at Glen Canyon.

We began our tour the same way all tourists do. Saw the usual view of the eight huge turbines and transformers and looked at the river below the dam. Then we donned hard hats and had an adventure none of us will forget for a long time.

We were fortunate the personnel had dismantled one of the giant turbines for repair, parts were all over the place, a piece here and another over there. Not just little parts, some of them weighed in at around thirty tons. At our first stop we peered over the edge of a huge circular hole that dropped into the bowels of the building five stories below where the turbine would have normally been. Jeff explained that we couldn't see much from here but not to be discouraged. We went from floor to floor in the power plant and viewed the hole from different vantage points all the way to the bottom. At each location Jeff explained which piece fitted into the gapping space and the purpose of it being there. At the bottom we arrived at the "Squirrel cage" where water from Lake Powell would normally pour through approximately fifteen foot diameter tubes with force enough to rotate the core of the turbine at high speed and create electricity. If any of us suffered from claustrophobia we would have had an attack here as we crawled through a small opening, down a ladder into the chamber where the water would usually roar through. We walked around looking at the fins that would catch the water and force it into the cage to turn the generator. The circular space looked a little like a snail shell. It

began with a diameter of about ten feet and as it proceeded around the turbine it diminished to only a few feet. This kept the force equal all around. From here the water ran through the bottom of the housing into the river below the dam. Going down still another flight of stairs to below the river we viewed the tubes that carried the water to the river. That is how we managed to walk under the Colorado.

It was interesting to learn that from Glen Canyon Jeff controls the dams on the Gunnison River in Colorado, the Green River in Wyoming and Utah as well as Glen Canyon dam. From his office he demonstrated how he kept tab of just what output came from every dam and knew instantly if anything went wrong even as far away as Flaming Gorge Dam in northern Utah. Jeff informed us how each of these generating plants would automatically pick up and supply power where ever needed throughout the western part of the country. If a generating plant suddenly went down in California diminishing the required amount of electricity to an area Glen Canyon could supply the energy in a fraction of a second. This would take place so fast no one would know it occurred. This is not all. The voltage, amperage and cycle must all remain exact. If any of these got out of hand it would cause trouble, such as burn out your refrigerator or blow up your television set. This control is Jeff's responsibility.

If all our workers in the United States were as dedicated and enthusiastic about their jobs as **Jeff Waite** is, the Japanese would eat their words about the American workers being lazy. We have placed this responsibility on a virtually self-educated young man dedicated to his job of serving the American people. Thanks Jeff.

*Bill Suran*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last October **Al Richmond** and I had the pleasure of meeting **Bob Chandler**, the new superintendent of Grand Canyon. We were pleased to hear Bob express his interest in preserving the historic aspect of the Canyon and he was interested in hearing about our activities. I'm sure Bob and his family would like to meet our membership so perhaps we should arrange this shortly.

The second printing of **Grand Canyon Pioneers Cookbook** has been completed. We just received 1,500 copies from Northland Printing and have already started distribution. We need some help with sales. Most of our sales have been through Northern Arizona News Agency, Fred Harvey, Grand Canyon Railway and Verkamps. Anyone interested in "pushing" our book at other locations, please give me a call. This is our major (only) source of income to fund preservation projects and our NAU scholarship.

I know it's been said elsewhere in this newsletter, but those who participated in our last outing joined together in a great experience. There were many aspects to our adventure which will remain with me; the fellowship we enjoyed together, placing my hand on history, and reflecting on the struggle these pioneers must have had to endure to make their journey. You will be interested to know we collected about 270 inscriptions including the four fish inscribed by the Dominguez-Excalante expedition in October 1776. Thank you everyone for all your help.

*Ron Werhan*



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Bongo to our group. New members are a sign of growth. Growth is an indication that we have created interest in what we want to accomplish. We all look forward to meeting the Bongos soon.

## NOTES from the SECRETARY

After several years of preparation, we finally awarded our first grant for historic preservation in the Grand Canyon region. We held a small presentation ceremony at the history department of NAU where president **Ron Werhan** awarded the \$250 scholarship to **Mike Anderson**. The history department chair, **Dr Neil Kunze**, graciously assisted in the presentation.

Mike is from Strawberry, Arizona, and has been doing work in the Canyon on the trail systems as part of his graduate studies for a master's degree in history. His work is focused on the north and south Bass trails, built by and named for William Wallace Bass. These trails originally served as access to his mining claims but when the mines proved unprofitable, he turned their use to tourism. As most of the individuals who have personal knowledge of these trails and their uses are now deceased, preservation of this information becomes more significant. To complete his study, Mike interviewed surviving pioneer users of the trails, researched the claims and legal descriptions, studied maps and photographs, and hiked all of the trail systems personally.

The paper produced from his research will be placed in the GCPS Collection at Cline Library Special Collections and Archives at NAU and will provide the basis for a nomination of the trails to the National Register of Historic Places. Mike put a lot of effort and travel into his research and this award will help to defray those expenses he incurred. Sounds like money well spent. In our annual meeting in/around October, the board will review this scholarship and decide on the amount for next year's award.

The process for our IRS nonprofit status is still in progress. **Steve Verkamp** made the necessary changes to our Articles of Incorporation to comply with the IRS's idea of how they should read (sounded an awful lot like the original to me) and the Arizona Corporation Commission has accepted and filed them. Back to the IRS again (it has only been seven months).

*Al Richmond*



Some of the inscriptions at House Rock Springs



Taking a break after surveying the inscriptions



Camp near House Rock Springs—resting after a hard day

## PIONEER SOCIETY'S OUTING OF APRIL 25, 1992

Those hardy members of the Society who ventured to House Rock Valley April 25 and 26 enjoyed a nice outing and camp out as well as some good food. Those who have never eaten Ron Werhan's river rat eggs have missed a real treat. Those attending were Marie Maiorana, Ron Werhan, Carol Furey-Werhan, Doug and Diane Van Cleve, Fred and Jeanne Schick, Mike Gibson, Bill and Sibyl Suran, Al Richmond, Mary McKenzie, Pat and Rita Burns with their two daughters, Cheney and Dannel, Matt and Robyn Werhan, and Mike Merritt. We must not omit the most important visitors, P. J., Zack, Michael, and Cossack who spent their time chasing each other around the camp site and barking at the horses. Thanks to all of you for a job well done.

### HOUSE ROCK VALLEY

Now some of you probably would like to know where in the world House Rock Valley is, and what the Grand Canyon Pioneers were doing at a spring that bears the same name. To answer the first part of the question - It is the valley formed between the Kaibab Plateau and the Paria Plateau. Now if that leaves you completely lost I will tell you it is that area north of Marble Canyon that spreads out at the base of the Vermilion Cliffs just before you start the climb toward Jacob's Lake on highway 89A. The answer to the second part of the question is - we were working, and you probably doubt that.

The valley has been the pathway from Utah into Arizona for hundreds of years. The Indians used the route long before the Escalante group made their way through there in 1776 on their way back to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Brigham Young sent Jacob Hamblin through the valley in 1858 hoping he

would find a way across the Colorado River to open relations with the Hopi Indians. A member of this expedition found two large boulders that formed a shelter large enough to protect five or six men. As a joke he, using a piece of charcoal, wrote across the face of the rock "Rock House Hotel." It was not long before the Mormon Church sent its members through the area to settle in Arizona. As the settlers followed along the walls of the towering cliffs they stopped at a spring to water their animals and to refresh themselves, found the name written on the rock and named the place Rock House Spring. While there they climbed the walls and inscribed their names in the sandstone. Frederick Dellenbaugh, a member of the second Powell expedition through the Grand Canyon, stopped at the rock shelter and noted the inscription still legible in 1882. The name of the valley and the spring later changed to House Rock, the name it bears today.

As time passed the young people who settled along the Little Colorado River in Arizona married and to abide by the rulings of the church passed through the valley in the opposite direction on their way to St. George to have their marriage vows solemnized. They also stopped at the spring and carved their names on the walls. Today we find hundreds of inscriptions including one carved by the Spanish priests. Many have worn away and are no longer legible. Some of the pioneers wrote with axle grease and their names have faded and can no longer be read. The purpose of our trip was to record what names we could find.

Matt Werhan surveyed the area while the rest of us numbered and copied the signatures. Al and Ron photographed each inscription to obtain a record of what appeared on the walls. The work has not ended yet. Many names remain to be copied, but time would not permit further work. We now have the task before us of tracing back through the Mormon records to see if it is possible to locate where these people settled. The rocks tell us some didn't make it as one inscription says "Joseph Adams from Kaysville to Arizona and busted on June 6 A.D. 1873." If these rocks and boulders could talk they would tell us more, perhaps the church records will add part of the missing links.

Our exhausted workers drove back to camp around four o'clock Saturday afternoon and relaxed. After a good camp supper Ron gave us the low down on the Mountain Meadows massacre and the story of John D. Lee. Before going to bed we viewed the moons around Jupiter through a telescope then snuggled down for a well deserved nights rest, some in tents, others in their cars or campers, a few spent the night in the motel.

Sunday morning Ron treated us to a generous helping of his river rat eggs and left-over cake.

Ron, Carol, Mike Gibson, Mike Merritt, and Matt and Robyn Werhan returned to the site Sunday morning and worked again on the survey.

When we finish the project a bit of history that has remained unrecorded will be preserved. Our work will be added to the Pioneer's collection at the NAU Library for future reference.

*Bill Suran*

**...Ron treated us to a generous helping of his "river rat eggs" ...**

## DEATHS

**Thelma Bartlett** passed away at her Flagstaff home on April 10 after a long illness. Born December 26, 1902 in Nashville, Tenn, she worked for Fred Harvey, Inc. as a housemother for the Harvey Girls for many years.

**Joe C. Shirley** another old timer of the Grand Canyon passed away in Phoenix on February 7. Born in Texas in 1904, Joe Shirley arrived at Grand Canyon in the fall of 1922, and went to work at the original Babbitt's store. T.A. Story, Joe's uncle, managed the store at the time. The business was in a small frame building located on the dirt road leading to Grandview, 200 yards east of Harvey's stone garage, south of the visitors camp ground and just east of the old schoolhouse.

Emery Kolb hired Joe to work at the studio in 1923 where he took pictures of the trail parties and worked in the darkroom. When business slowed in the shop he sold pictures and passed out Emery's cards near Bright Angel Hotel advertising the Kolb lecture. In 1923 he hiked to the river at Havasupai with the party carrying provisions for the Birdseye expedition. Joe packed down the primitive radio receiver that Birdseye sent out earlier for repair.

He attended the State Normal School at Flagstaff in 1923/24 where he played football and edited the school paper. In 1925 he studied at Pasadena Junior College and went on from there to complete his education at Stanford University.

He worked in the travel business in the East conducting world tours but came home to Arizona in 1940 to teach history and act as a liaison for foreign students at the University of Arizona. He later became one of the founding members of the faculty of Mesa Community College. We express condolences to the survivors of these two pioneers.

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All inquiries, comments, submissions, etc. are WELCOMED and may be sent to the above address.

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