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Canyon Legacy

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Literature of the Canyons



Canyon Legacy

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Within . . .

I've always thought of the canyons of Southeastern Utah as sacred. When I lived away from this area, I would dream every night of the last rays of daylight on Parriot Mesa, the smell of alfalfa and sage after a rain, and the sound of Colorado River as it passed me by on its way through canyons I could not enter alone.

The canyons of Southeastern Utah have served as inspiration for writers since their discovery. Frank Dellenbaugh wrote of the romance after his exploration of the Green and Colorado Rivers with Major John Wesley Powell. Zane Grey followed suit when he used the landscape as a character in his western novels *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *The Rainbow Trail*.

Historians David Lavender and Pearl Baker told their personal stories of growing up in canyons and deserts of Southeastern Utah while conservationists like Wallace Stegner and Edward Abbey told of their love for the area while pleading responsibility in the use of the land. There is also the unique relationship between women writers and the landscape such as Terry Tempest Williams, Ellen Meloy, Ann Zwinger and Ann Walka.

This month's Canyon Legacy tells the stories of the writers and their works who were inspired by the landscape and history of Southeastern Utah. Their writings bridged the gap between beauty and words. Their works, lives and personal stories follow in this issue of the Canyon Legacy.

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Canyon Legacy

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Front cover: The Heart of Marble Canyon.

Courtesy of The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons by John Wesley Powell.

Wallace Stegner

Writer, Historian, and Conservationist

by John Weisheit

The writing of Wallace Stegner was motivated by a deep appreciation for the American landscape. Stegner is probably most famous for his landscape writing of the American West but he also wrote books about other American landscapes such as, *Second Growth* (1947), which contrasted the lives of visitors and villagers in New Hampshire. He even wrote off-continent with his book *Discovery! The Search for Arabian Oil* (1971).

Stegner was an influential American writer who motivated our social conscience much like Mark Twain or John Steinbeck. For Stegner, this included books such as, *Fire and Ice* (1941), about a college student temporarily joining the Communist party; *The Preacher and the Slave* (1950), about Joe Hill of the Industrial Workers of the World; *A Shooting Star* (1961), presenting ways of life among established, wealthy northern Californians and *This is Dinosaur: Echo Park and Its Magic Rivers* (1956), a conservationist plea for a Utah and Colorado national monument.

The landscape that would become the greatest motivating force of his long literary career was that of the high plains. His childhood years were spent in Iowa, where he was born in a community called Lake Mills on

February 18, 1909. As a young boy his family moved to the Saskatchewan Province of Canada.

As he himself admitted, this landscape gives one a feeling of openness and of simplicity; a place where distance and direction are indiscernible. It was metaphorical of one who looks into life honestly and courageously without persuasion.

His first two books were based on this landscape, *Remembering Laughter* (1937), set in Iowa, and *On a Darkling Plain* (1940), about a Canadian veteran seeking solitude on the prairie.

Stegner did his undergraduate work at the University of Utah. He was encouraged into writing by Varvis Fisher, the English composition teacher of his sophomore year. Stegner's thesis was about Clarence Dutton, one of the geologists who worked for the Powell Survey on the Colorado Plateau in the 1870's. His graduate work was completed at the University of Iowa where he received his Ph.D. in 1935 for American literature.

During The Depression, he returned to Utah to teach for three years and then went to Harvard where he spent time with such mentors as Bernard

De Voto and Robert Frost. He left Harvard in 1945 when he received a full professorship at Stanford. Here he founded and directed the writing program that has had a profound effect upon contemporary American fiction.

One of his Stanford students was Edward Abbey, whose landscape of inspiration was unquestionably that of the Colorado Plateau, with *Desert Solitaire* being Abbey's most successful publication (See *Canyon Legacy* article by Lloyd Pierson, page 5 this issue.)

During the time he spent at the University of Utah, Stegner was introduced to the Great Basin and the Colorado Plateau. His books that dealt with these landscapes include *Mormon Country* (1942), presenting the local scene and its folkways; *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and The Second Opening of the West* (1954), the professional career of John Wesley Powell; *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (1964); *Recapitulation* (1979), a tale of a Jack Mormon family; *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West* (1992).

There are two dominant themes for much of Stegner's fiction, which are revealed in such books as *On a Darkling Plain*, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (1943) and *Angle of Repose* (Pulitzer Prize 1971). Those themes are: the danger of people who isolate themselves from society and the importance of a close family relationship. These themes are based on the personal experiences of Stegner's family life but should not to be considered as entirely autobiographical.

His conservation consciousness was reflected in such books as *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* and *This is Dinosaur*. *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* is considered by many to be a fundamental reader for acquiring a western social enlightenment. Not because it is a book about the career of John Wesley Powell, but because it epitomizes Powell's vision to develop a raw frontier into a working social model based on scientific principles. The current problems of the arid West and the developing world-at-large might have been avoided had this model been empowered by decision-makers.

This is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country and Its Magic Rivers came about due to two influences, one Stegner's background as vacationing river runner on the Green River through the Echo Park Country and on the Colorado River through Glen Canyon, and by writing conservation-type articles that introduced him to David Brower and Martin Litton of the Sierra Club.

This masterpiece of public relations worked to save the

Echo Park Country from water inundation by a dam. Ironically this success later turned into a tragedy when Glen Canyon was flooded instead - Stegner warned the Sierra Club about this miscalculation.

though, some of them do- that they could make a killing. They probably have some personal reasons for thinking so, too, because there is a local elite in almost every state which actually realizes most of the economic opportunities and reaps



Wallace Stegner, 1983.

Courtesy of Conversations with Wallace Stegner on Western History & Literature.

His conservation ideals are shown in his resistant stand towards a movement called the Sagebrush Rebellion. He felt this group to be a largely manipulated by the extractive industries who want the Public Domain handed over to the states for the development of its natural resources.

Said Stegner, "I think (The states) are deluded. They get more income out of it the way it is, because they get half the leasing fees... They also get a lot of things taken care of. They get extra money for roads, highways, freeways, interstates through the public land. They get every sort of subsidy, which they forget. They think

most of the profits from them... Those are the people who are for the Sagebrush Rebellion because it's got an interest in getting those public lands opened to mineral and oil extraction. The United States Chamber of Commerce, The Wall Street Journal, the Sagebrush Rebels, they're all of one economic complexion."

Stegner also had a resentment for the Bureau of Reclamation and their "hand-in-glove" politics. Said Stegner, "It's a federal force, but it's on the states' side because it gets its political backing from the states' side, from the local elites, and from the water users. The Bureau of Reclamation becomes in

effect, one of the enemies that the federal government has to resist. All of those forces work for private interests as against the public interest, I think."

For the environmentalist movement, he gave this warning: "There is among environmentalists a sentimental fringe, people who respond as you say some of your students do, with a blind preservationism in all circumstances. But you can't do that. You manifestly can't go that far, though it would be nice, visually and in other ways; people do have to live too. Some kind of compromise has to be made."

Wallace Stegner was truly one of America's greatest contemporary writers. Besides his Pulitzer Prize for *Angle of Repose* he was also awarded the Commonwealth Club Gold Medal for *All the Little Live Things* (1967); the National Book Award for *The Spectator Bird* (1977). Three of his short stories have won O. Henry prizes, and in 1980 he received the Robert Kirsch Award from the Los Angeles Times for his lifetime literary achievements.

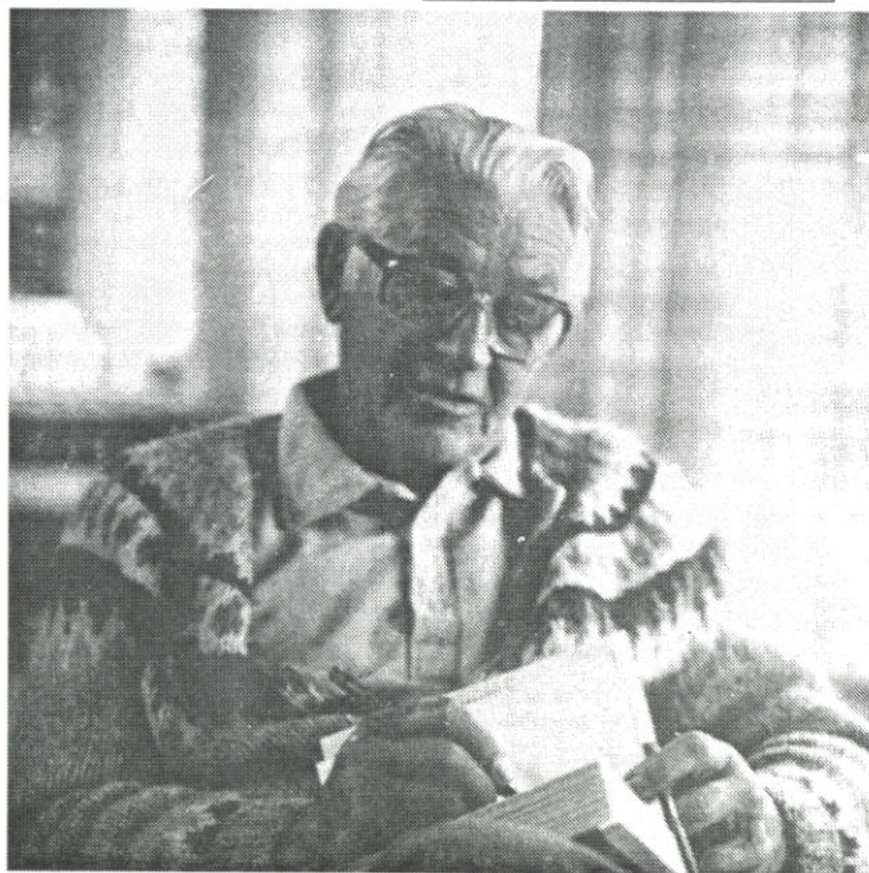
What Stegner left for us is probably best said by the man himself, "I take a moralistic view of writing - to think of it not only as an art, but also as a kind of cultural function. I suppose I'm constantly trying to bear in mind that having been very lucky, I also am very responsible, and that the only thing that makes civilization go forward is the responsibility of individuals, whether gifted or otherwise, small or large. All of us have the obligation somehow to have some kind of

concern for the species, for the culture, for the larger thing outside of ourselves."

Wallace Stegner died on April 13, 1993.

For more information on the career of Wallace Stegner I recommend:

Conversations with Wallace Stegner on Western History and Literature. 1983. Wallace Stegner and Richard W. Etulain. University of Utah Press.



Wallace Stegner, 1983

Courtesy of Conversations with Wallace Stegner on Western History and Literature.

Brought forth
from heaving
loam fires
long ago,
at the end
burn me
scenic heights high
on a blazing
pinon pyre,
letting
wind and water
sprinkle me
toward
wild
wherever.
JRG '93

Edward Abbey (1927- 1989)

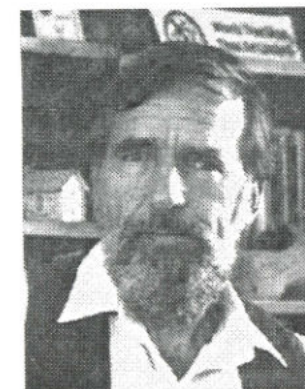
by Lloyd M. Pierson, 1985

Edward Paul Abbey was born near the large city of Indiana in mountainous western Pennsylvania. He grew up during the Great Depression in an area considered by some to be depressing enough by itself. Heavily wooded narrow mountain valleys crowded with people aggressively asserting themselves, and smudged by belching factories and clouded by the coal smoke of winter were the norm as he grew up. Like many young men of the time he left the nest on a tour, the poor boys equivalent of the Smith girls year in Europe - a hitchhiking tour of the west in 1944.

Like many of us Ed was enthralled by the clarity of the air, the expanses of land with few people, the freedom of the inhabitants and the mysterious Indians, both past and present. In short he fell in love with the Southwest of the four corners states: New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah and west Texas. As he studied, lived and loved in these areas he became aware of the fact that there were forces afoot to make his geographical love just like the horror he left behind in Pennsylvania. Or at least that was his perception.

He spent time in the army in Italy as an M.P. during World War II. After he attended the University of New Mexico gain-

ing an M.A. in Philosophy. He increased his love of the Southwest during summer travels and later with temporary jobs in various national parks and monuments and forest service areas. In



Edward Abbey, 1988

Courtesy of The Fool's Progress

between he was a Fulbright fellow in Scotland and even lowered himself by taking temporary jobs in such places as the Everglades National Park and as a social worker in New Jersey. Each time he returned to his environmental love - the Southwest where he was to end his life.

Much like Saint George, Ed picked up his lance of literary ability and went forth to slay the dragon of rampant, unbridled commercial development of the West. With the publication of *Desert Solitaire* (McGraw-Hill,

1968) he soon became a leader in the environmental movement.

He was especially appreciated by the intellectuals in the colleges and universities where his books became texts in environmental courses. His good writing and ability to stir up the younger generation in their quest for something to irritate the establishment with time and money their parents never had made him a guru of the environmental movement.

He was compared with Thoreau, John Muir, Ansel Adams, a coyote, placed on an uncomfortable pedestal and worshipped by fellow environmental writers and conservationists for his outspoken, devil take the hindmost, approach to "saving the West."

At the other pole the develop or die diehards of the West hated his guts. They still refer to him and his kind derisively as "tree huggers, Sahara Clubbers, waffle stompers, damned aesthetes, fiends of the earth," and many Nixonian expletives.

His fifth and last wife summed his character up best when she said, "Don't make him into a mystical hero. He was damn real, and a very difficult man."

Ed used his personal experiences and those others with whom he associated in his writings as most effective writers do.

He did change names and events to suit his story line, a literary cop-out which avoided many things: historical truth, law suits, aggravated friends and relatives, belligerent bureaucrats and sadistic politicians.

In many of his self-styled novels he used a park naturalist's approach to his descriptions of the natural scene, its plants, animals and landform. He mostly used the southwestern United States which he continued to view with the same dewy-eyed wonder that many adventurers have on first encounter with the expansive elbow room of the southwest desert.

His love affair lasted until the very end in spite of occasional lapses in sanity when he spent time outside the desert in nefarious and decadent places back East. Somewhere, out in the Arizona desert, under a pile of rocks so the coyotes won't dig him up, his body lies for eternity, or at least until some innocent archeologist digs him up thinking his burial an ancient one. Hopefully he left an identifying note with the body.

Desert Solitaire, first published in 1968 by McGraw Hill, was Ed Abbey's sky rocket burst into literary and environmental fame, glory, and incidentally, money. He had written other things, but this one put him on a golden plateau in the full light of fame from which he never had to come down. His place in the pantheon of protectors of mother earth was guaranteed.

My personal acquaintance with Ed began in August 1956 when I was transferred to Arches National Monument. He was

working as a seasonal ranger, stationed out at the Balanced Rock in a small trailer. He came back the next year to the same spot with his wife Rita and one year old son Joshua. In later years I had some contact with him at book readings and signings as he climbed the ladder of success.

In the original *Desert Solitaire*, written mostly while at Arches, he compressed the character of several people who worked with him at Arches into two characters, Merle McRae and Floyd Bence, the superintendent and chief ranger. But these characters were primarily, as he admitted to me and was obvious to anyone who knew us, Superintendent Bates Wilson and myself.

The Merle probably came from Merle Winbourn, our independent and ultra-competent maintenance man and road foreman. Floyd, most likely, a frequent corruption of my name and a natural transposition of my name most frequently found on the junk mail I receive.

The latest edition of *Desert Solitaire*, the 20th anniversary volume put out by the University of Arizona Press in 1988, apparently unafraid that Bates and I would sue or perhaps thinking that I, like Bates had passed on, he used our real names for his original McRae and Bence characters. More likely it was a backhand way of appreciation - who knows? I don't know about Bates, he died in 1983, but I was somewhat flattered. At least it gave a conversation bit.

At the risk of taking the bloom off the good writings of Abbey I feel, for the sake of his-

toric accuracy, I must tell the rest or the truth of Ed's stories that I was associated with in *Desert Solitaire*. Perhaps our progeny thus can better understand the workings of Ed's mind, if at all possible, or at least the truth of the matter, if they are still indeed interested. The real stories are almost as interesting, though hardly as well-written as Ed would do.

The chapter in *Desert Solitaire* entitled, "The Dead Man at Grand View Point," was based on a real and traumatic and sad event. A gentleman from Stockton, California, 69 year old Clinton Kjar, parked his car off the road near Upheaval Dome so that he could take photographs of the dramatic scenery there. H.R. Joesting, an U.S. Geological Survey geologist, working in the area, noticed the parked car on Sunday, August 11, 1957. It was still there on Tuesday, so Joesting notified Bates Wilson who in turn notified Sheriff John Stocks and a hastily organized search began that afternoon.

Kjar apparently had wandered along the rims of Holman Springs Basin and Trail Canyon taking photographs. Feeling ill, he sat down under a shady pinyon tree near the canyon rim, placed his camera in his lap, and died quietly in one of God's more beautiful pieces of real estate.

In 1957, although this was San Juan County, the Grand County Sheriff had the responsibility for law enforcement. It was isolated country with dirt roads and no signs as the Bureau of Land Management, who administered the area, had yet to assume any responsibility for

anything other than grazing and mining in the area. The world was reading about the beauties of southeastern Utah through articles in *National Geographic* and *Desert Magazine* and the restless lovers of the great out-of-doors were starting to explore a land that not many of them understood, let alone were prepared to enter along with a community that was not ready to handle tourism of any sort. Mr. Kjar was a prime example. He left his water supply in the car and told no one where he was going.

Sheriff Stocks, a local cattleman turned law enforcer, was hardly more prepared than his visitors as he had no real search and rescue organization and few deputies. So he called upon Bates Wilson to provide help - park rangers had a great reputation then in such activities, especially Bates. This meant over the two days we searched, using Ed Abbey, his brother John, who was a seasonal ranger at Natural Bridges that year, Bates's son Allan and myself. Allan or "Tug" as he was usually called, was a volunteer home from college.

Other volunteers were Harold Barton and Johnny Stocks of Moab, Deputy Wesley Barton, and Lewis Kjar, the son of Mr. Kjar and Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bagley of Midvale, Utah. The largest party came the second day of the search. Tuesday the party consisted mostly of the Sheriff, Bates, Tug, Ed and myself. The next day I remained in the office, holding down the store, while John Abbey took my place.

The Tuesday party spent the day searching up and down the rim near the vicinity of the car.

Tug rappelled down a fifty foot cliff to the ledge below seeking what almost certainly was a corpse rather than a live, wounded human being. The high temperatures and elapsed time cruelly indicated this to be the case.

Tug Wilson's dangerous cliff-hanging was in vain as were all our efforts that afternoon. Late in the day, I did smell a strange, sweet, rotten odor that I hadn't, in retrospect, encountered since the bulldozer accidentally dug up a dead Japanese soldier's body near our mess hall on Okinawa back in 1945. I was too tired out at Upheaval Dome to make any sense of the strange odor at the time. Only later did it fall into place.

The next afternoon at 1:30, John Abbey found the body on the rim of Trail Canyon two miles from the man's car. The Sheriff notified the county coroner who drove out in his hearse. Even with a liquid-proof body bag, it is a most unpleasant task to put a body in a bag and carry it, in this case a half mile to a waiting vehicle.

The desert heat and internal microbes quickly bloat and blacken a body beyond anything readily recognizable as human. I am certain the tension of the occasion was relieved by gallows humor as Ed indicated in his version of the episode. But, I wasn't there and my feet aren't really that big for a guy 6 foot 1 1/2 inches tall — shoe size 10 1/2 — is that big?

The dead man's son was quite philosophical about his father's passing. The old gentle-

man died doing what he liked, taking photographs in a place of beauty. Although, I suspect he really didn't want to cause all the trouble he did. At least Ed got an inspiration and a good piece of literature out of it.

In Ed's version, he mentions being called from headquarters by radio to go on the search. I don't believe we had the luxury of a park communication system at the time. The only radio I remember was for communication with the general superintendent in Sante Fe or Globe, Arizona, where he had his office at the time. It was an old Navy crystal operated set obtained from surplus property, like much of our equipment at the time. The antenna was an aluminum pole stuck on a Coke bottle for a base insulator and guyed with wire and other insulation. It worked well for a cheap, practical installation.

When I entered on duty in 1956 at Arches I replaced Robert Morris. I never loaned Ed one of my park service shirts, although being about the same size it would have fit. Maybe Morris did but I couldn't afford any extras of those expensive, paid-for-by-myself, official National Park Service uniform shirts by Fechheimer.

The final paragraphs in *Desert Solitaire* indicate that Morris took him to the train at Thompsons Springs. Contrived, for Morris wasn't at Arches at the time. I was. Besides, Ed had a car, a wife and a child to move, but it did make a good ending for a good book.

The summer of 1957 must have been too traumatic and complicated for Ed's tastes for it

was his last at Arches. Other than the search for the dead man, he suffered the indignation of seeing the start of the paved road building into Arches. His peace and tranquility were interrupted by rescuing a man with a broken hip not a week after the search for Mr. Kjar. Several other incidents must have convinced Ed that Arches was too civilized and accident-prone for his lifestyle.

To complicate his life he had to keep his wife and small child happy in his isolation and tiny trailer at Balanced Rock, a not too easy job in any circumstances. His wife was a painter of modern art. I made slides of her somewhat confusing work for her. Bates, daughter, Cindy, thought that Joshua had painted them when she saw them. They were very modern but Rita, Ed's wife, had arrows on the back side to show up from down to avoid confusion by all.

As he wrote the introduction to the first edition of *Desert Solitaire*, Ed apparently was not aware of how much input the superintendent in the small National Park Service areas had in the 1950's and 1960's in the Master Plan which guided development. Superintendents, like Bates, had the time and interest in exploring the areas they administered and becoming intimately acquainted with every hill and canyon and problem that might occur. Consequently, they wrote the Master Plan based on a few vague constrictions set by Washington and the regional office. When planners from the region were involved they usually deferred to the su-

perintendent for life was much less complicated then and many of the environmental worries and tourist impacts were unknown in those happy days. In an area like Arches, close to town, communication and development of support for park projects among the local population was continuous and best left to the superintendents who were part of the local culture.

By the time of the publishing of the latest edition of *Desert Solitaire*, Ed must have wised up to the fact that Bates and I, and others before us had actually done the planning for the roads and developments he so hated and objected to. He eliminated the introduction which was so kindly towards the "working rangers in the field" and substituted a preface in which he further decried the "industrial tourism," told the history of the writing of the book and made a lot of self-explanatory remarks.

Ed was a good ranger. He did pick up the tourists' garbage and his own, clean outhouses, patrol the roads picking up trash and still managed to talk to tourists in his own inimitable manner. We never had a complaint from the visitors about him. He did show up the second summer with a beard, but cut it off, perhaps because Bates asked him. I had told Bates there was nothing against beards in the regulations.

He was blackballed by the regional office in a subtle manner the next spring when they issued a directive that anyone thinking of hiring Ed, should contact them first. He must have joined some suspect organization in those days of Senator

McCarthy and his communist-hating paranoia. About the time we were trying to figure out how to contact Ed about the memorandum he showed up and we let him see it. A quick trip to the regional office on his part solved the problem and he continued his periodic seasonal ranger work.

Those were marvelous care-free days in the 1950's, but it would have been presumptuous and bitter-hearted to have kept it all to ourselves. There were and are other almost no less spectacular places to enjoy that were not developed or on the tourist-oriented maps. People need parks else we all get a little crazier than we already are. Lots of rangers, Ed included, felt like the park area they worked in was theirs alone and that the tourists who visited them were a public nuisance.

Ed felt the tourist should enjoy the park as he did on a primitive basis forgetting not everyone was as healthy as he. Many of us never felt that way even though some tourists can be a real pain at times. We tended to emphasize the "Service" in the "National Park Service." My management philosophy was: if the park people are not smart enough to stay ahead of the Neanderthal or non-thinking, uneducated about the outdoors tourist, the he/she/it doesn't belong on the job.

In reality, Ed was part of the problem. By writing about the wonders of southeastern Utah, he stimulated a whole horde of nature lovers, sincere and faddish who would love southeast-

ern Utah to death and others who would like to take it back to the Pleistocene. He did a better job of advertising than the local chamber of commerce ever did, but if Ed hadn't done it someone else would have; someone not so eloquently persuasive or understanding of the problems in desert environmentalism. Fortunately some of his outdoor philosophy has stuck and struck a chord among certain segments of our population. Unfortunately he has also stimulated the radical fringe in environmental matters too.

Ed was not a demonstrative person when he worked at Arches. He always struck me as somewhat quiet and reserved with an ironic sense of humor. He loved to gig us about paving the entire monument and calling it "Arches National Moneymint." His remarks in *Desert Solitaire* about my dreading my transfer to the cannonball circuit back East resulted from his finding me at Appomattox Courthouse, where the Civil War ended, one day and was his way of kidding me about being there. I actually somewhat enjoyed the appointment although I did plan to get back to the Southwest one way or the other.

Some of his characterization of Bates was not accurate either. Bates did have a real ulcer and I don't think he ever attended the University of Virginia.

Ed always told us he was a writer and a poet, but he never bragged about his work, although one of his early books had been made into a movie. We took his writer talk with a grain of salt. We had our own style of

writing - bureaucratic. And we never considered ourselves as literary critics so it came as a surprise when Ed's fame as a writer emerged. If we had known the power of his pen, we would

have had him writing our usually dry governmental reports rather than picking up the garbage. Wouldn't that have set the regional office on its collective ear?

A Conversation with Ed Abbey

by Janet Lowe

I heard about your death
and thought you'd be pleased to know
the news passed
from hiker to hiker
at the bottom of the world
with the roar of Hermit Rapids
(a suitable dirge)
in our ears
and the foaming brown Colorado
numbing our blistered feet.
You would have liked it too,
I suppose,
that on the way down
the canyon threatened
to consume me,
swallow me into bedrock
first at Supai
then Red Rock,
Blue Angel,
and finally even at the Vishnu Schist,
but, I think you'd also like
how I fought back, Abbey,
in spite of unmistakable
profanities hurled at the earth
and tears which evaporated
before they reached the ground.
And you would have answered
my repeated question:
How in the hell am I ever going to get out of
here?
quite simply.
Don't, you'd say.
Stay.

Previously published in *Earth First! Journal*

On the Back of the Dragon

A glimpse of Frederick S. Dellenbaugh

by James Page

"As I advanced towards him he rose to his feet, surveyed me with a lightning glance, and said heartily, 'Well, Fred, you'll do.' These words constituted me a member of his party, and I began my preparations forthwith."

With a quick appraisal and a few words seventeen-year old Frederick Samuel Dellenbaugh was selected to accompany Major John Wesley Powell on his second exploration down the Green and Colorado (then known as the Grand) Rivers in 1871. Dellenbaugh, the son of a Buffalo physician, was hired principally as a boatman having stated fast water skills from frequently rowing across the Niagara River. A quick learner, with a sense of humor and a lively conversationalist, he possessed other skills that would prove invaluable to Powell.

Dellenbaugh's preparations did not consume much time. Among his dunnage he had a heavy cotton shirt, a pair of cotton overalls, heavy hobnailed boots, a felt hat, his harmonica, a Remington .44 revolver, and a few pounds of candy he had purchased at Gunther's in Chicago.

Shortly thereafter he was on his way to Green River, Wyoming to assist in the preparation and loading of the boats that would carry the second Powell expedition down the Green and

Colorado Rivers. In 1869 Powell and nine men in four small boats had entered the vast unknown of the inner depths of the Colorado River. Powell pursued that quest with a zeal characteristic of explorers hurrying to fill the void of information on one of the last frontiers of the American West.



F. S. Dellenbaugh, 1872.

Tintype by J.K.Hillers, courtesy of Romance of the Colorado.

The journey was fraught with personal hardships and tested the grit of men who had recently experienced the horrors and personal trauma of the Civil War. While the successful navigation of the rivers would temporarily satisfy the thirst of newspapers, romantic storytellers and others of similar bent it came up short on scientific information. The act of steering boats, running and portaging rapids along an unknown river course at the rate of 23 miles per day left little time for scientific measure-

ments and evaluations.

The 1869 expedition served to increase the geographical thirst of the federal government in their endeavor to further the partnership with the settlers in the land-gulping expansionism of the American West.

Aside from the triumph of the first authenticated navigation of the Colorado River, the 1869 journey is also remembered for the desertion by three of the expeditions members (O.G. Howland, Seneca Howland and W.H. Dunn) at Separation Rapid. This event would have a lasting effect on Dellenbaugh when he later wrote two books about Powell and the exploration of the Colorado River.

Dellenbaugh began the journey that would have the greatest impact on shaping his life. Powell had assembled a group of men that did not include any veterans from his first expedition. Jack Sumner had been invited but a snow storm prevented him from leaving his mountain retreat.

While the first party had been mostly gathered from Civil War acquaintances or having "mountain men" characteristics, the second party had a hearty academic and scientific flavor. Powell's second-in-command was his brother-in-law Almon Harris Thompson, a professional geographer.

On May 22, 1871, the party pushed off from Green River, Wyoming, in three boats made especially for these rivers. Down through Flaming Gorge, Horseshoe Canyon, Red Canyon, Canyon of Lodore, Whirlpool Canyon, Split Mountain Canyon and Desolation Canyon, they reached Gunnison Crossing (founded in 1878 as Green River, Utah) on September 2, 1871.

At a camp eighteen miles down river from Gunnison Crossing, Dellenbaugh was taken by the artistry of the surprisingly symmetrical buttes resembling an artificial structure. Commenting that it looked like an artists' gallery, Major Powell said "...that it ought to be named after the artist, so he called it Dellenbaugh's Butte then and there." And so it was on September 4, 1871.

Two weeks later after a stretch of relatively easy boating through Labyrinth and Stillwater Canyons the party reached the junction of the Green and the Grand. From this point down through Cataract Canyon and Glen Canyon their journey was one of continual hardship of food shortages, back breaking portages, lost gear, hair-raising rapids, and continual boat repairs. Each member kept a journal of the trip and one entry best sums up these experiences "Got up, ran rapids, went to bed." There was little time for anything else.

Dellenbaugh was captivated by the majesty of the canyons. A gifted, though self-taught artist, he found time to produce many sketches (pencil, oil and watercolors) of rock formations, pictographs and other formations

that could not be captured by photographic methods. Thus he painted the first picture of the Grand Canyon country.

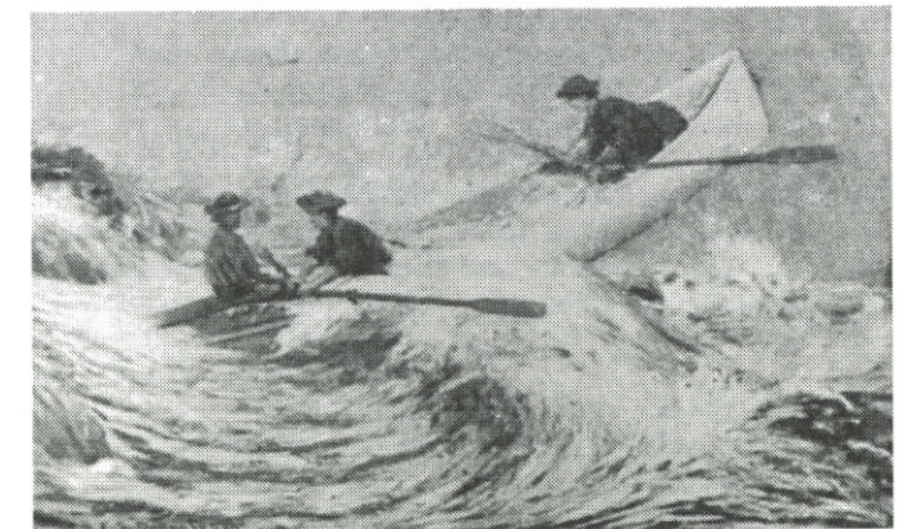
The first stage of the river trip ended at Lee's Ferry on October 26, 1871. During the 1871-72 winter months Major Powell spent considerable time away on personal business, enlisting support and making logistical arrangements for the expedition. Meanwhile the members were making extensive surveys of the adjacent lands, recording field observations, making maps and "wintering over." During these times the expedition was under the able leadership of Thompson. By August 17th Major Powell had returned and the expedition was ready to complete the survey of the river.

On September 7, 1872, after reaching Kanab Creek, Major Powell decided to end the journey as there was little scientific gain in continuing a route that had been previously explored. Lieutenant Joseph C. Ives had mapped the south side of the river in 1861 and the north side

of the canyon could be mapped by land parties.

Among the many scientific accomplishments of this journey can be counted the notable achievements of discovering the last river (the Escalante - discovered by Thompson and Dellenbaugh) and the last mountain range (the Henry) in the continental United States. Dellenbaugh subsequently assisted in making the first map of the Grand Canyon region. When completed in February 1873 the map was soldered in a tin tub and Dellenbaugh carried it on his back through worsening winter conditions to Salt Lake City where he mailed it to Washington.

Along the river course they had encountered settlers, miners and notable personages. Dellenbaugh counted among his friends Jacob Hamblin, the famous Mormon scout and pioneer. In July 1872 Dellenbaugh became acquainted with John Doyle Lee who was rumored to be a leader in the Mountain Meadow massacre of 1857. Con-



In the midst of Grand Canyon.

Drawing by F.S. Dellenbaugh. Courtesy of Romance of the Colorado.

sequently Lee and his family were initially suspicious of travelers.

On one occasion Dellenbaugh and Andy Hattan, the expedition's cook, were visiting Lee and " ...Andy, always up to mischief, in his quiet way delighted to get behind him and cock his rifle. At the sound of the ominous click Lee would wheel like a flash to see what was up. We had no intention of capturing him, of course, but it amused Andy to act in a way that kept Lee on the qui vive."

Dellenbaugh came away from this two year odyssey with a sense of complete personal satisfaction. He was particularly proud of the fact that a group of men could be thrown together for the first time, spend months without outside contact, under the most severe hardships and deprivations, remain harmonious, and "...never once did any member of that party show the white feather."

After completing his work with Powell in 1873 he went on to travel extensively through Nevada and California during 1874-1875; followed by expeditions through Utah, Arizona and Colorado. During the winter of 1884-85 he resided for six months in the Hopi towns of Arizona. He pursued his love of art and studied at the Royal Academy of Art in Munich and under Carolus Duran at the Julian Academy in Paris.

In 1875 Major Powell published his record of the 1869 and 1871 expeditions. His story, *Explorations of the Colorado of the West and the Tributaries*, was written in such a manner as to embody the scientific evidence and

personal experiences of both trips into one event so that the reader is led to believe that everything was accomplished in 1869.

Furthermore, while using the field notes, maps, place names, collections and discoveries of the second trip, Major Powell never once recognized the achievements or acknowledged the name of his other colleagues. Only Almon Thompson (his brother-in-law) is mentioned in where his diary accounts his journey to the Dirty Devil River.

Many have speculated on Major Powell's reason for adopting this strategy. He never denied the fact of the second expedition, for his preliminary report of 1874 discusses it, and the preface of his book mentions that the rivers were explored in 1871-72 also. His actions, however, did an extreme disservice to history, covered or muted some of his own achievements on the second expedition, and were a cause of frequent embarrassment to the members of the second expedition - particularly Dellenbaugh.

Dellenbaugh compiled his river diary during 1881-82 and continued to paint, write, lecture and travel. In 1899 he traveled to Alaska and Siberia with the Harriman expedition and to Norway and Spitzbergen in 1906. Other trips took him to the West Indies and to South America where he continued to study and paint the native peoples and natural features of the countries.

Returning to America, he devoted his life to writing and painting. In 1900 he wrote *North Americans of Yesterday*. In 1902 he published *The Romance of the*

Colorado River, an intriguing review of the history from the coming of the Spaniards in 1539 to the Stanton Railroad Survey in 1889.

On September 23, 1902, Major Powell passed away. He was accorded full military honors and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Dellenbaugh was among the large group of distinguished mourners.

Up to the time of his death Major Powell had resisted requests for information on his river expeditions. Dellenbaugh, however, complied with the frequent requests and became by default the official historian of the expeditions.

In 1905 Dellenbaugh published *Breaking the Wilderness* and in 1908 he published *A Canyon Voyage*, which was an elaboration of his diary of 1871-1873 and became the first full, detailed and human account of the second expedition. Dellenbaugh was forever uncomfortable with Major Powell's literary strategy and felt that it was unjust to the history of the event and to the significant contributions and memories of his fellow travelers. Accordingly, Dellenbaugh's book placed the second expedition on the record and remained for a long time the only authority on the achievements of the 1871-73 expedition.

In 1914 he published *Fremont and '49* and in 1917 he published the *Life of General Armstrong Custer*. Dellenbaugh's paintings include remarkable Native American scenes and the best of his collection resides in the Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

In 1918, through a Congres-

sional action, a monument commemorating the Powell expeditions of 1869 and 1871 was dedicated on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. Much controversy had preceded the casting of the bronze plaque. Conspicuously absent from the 1869 roster were the names of the Howland brothers and William Dunn. The omission had been approved by Dellenbaugh who had vehemently opposed any honorable mention of the three 'deserters' on this memorial.

Dellenbaugh was forever loyal to Major Powell, no matter what the circumstance, and he was equally proud of the second expedition where no member of the expedition "showed the white feather." While Powell never said a derogatory word about these men and "often spoke of them affectionately," Dellenbaugh felt it totally inappropriate to include their names on the Powell Memorial.

Dellenbaugh did, however, support the placing of a monument at Separation Rapid honoring the 1869 expedition there, especially the Howland brothers and William Dunn. On this issue Dellenbaugh felt that "... the Howland brothers and Bill Dunn were not ordinary quitters. They were fine fellows. The conditions were peculiar."

In his later years Dellenbaugh remained active in his art work and maintained a steady correspondence with other historians. He became ill while walking through a snowstorm on his way to a meeting of the Explorers Club of New York, which he was a founder. He died of pneumonia on January 29, 1935. He was 81.

For some he is best remembered for his diary entry when he first saw the junction of the Green and Grand Rivers in September 1871. "At the end of the seven miles of winding canyon, there came a sharp turn to the east, which brought into view, at the other end, another canyon of nearly equal proportions and similar appearance. In the bottom of this flowed a river of almost the same size as the Green. The waters of the two came together with a good deal of a rush, the commingling being plainly visible. Neither over-

whelmed the other; it was a perfect union, and in some respects it is quite appropriate that the combined waters of these streams should have a special name to represent them. The new tributary was Grand River, and when our boats floated on the united waters, we were at last on the back of the Dragon."

For more reading:
The Romance of the Colorado by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, 1904.
A Canyon Voyage by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, 1908

In Hunter Canyon

by Janet Lowe

We shared sandstone
with young lizards
each of us stretched
long and still on the rock
dreaming there were no other
footprints in the sand.
We dreamed skies without jet trails,
air without smog.
We dreamed Peregrine
back in numbers too great to count.
We dreamed wilderness
without roads
rivers running wild
trees safe from saws
pot holes alive with shrimp.
Ravens circled over Wingate cliffs
swooping to catch out dreams,
toss them like a net over the West.
And still we drowsed with lizards
who watched
stretched long and patient on the rock
dreaming us gone.

A Man of the West David Lavender

by Andrea Brand

Of all the canyon country authors featured in this issue of *Canyon Legacy*, David Lavender at 85 years of age probably has the longest personal history with this area. He was born in Telluride and his family had a cattle ranch in the Paradox Valley, between Telluride, Colorado and La Sal, Utah. He became entranced with the canyon country in the 1930s when he went to buy cattle from Al Scorup's Indian Creek ranch outside what is now the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park.



In December I spoke with Mr. Lavender from his home in Ojai, California. *"I was in Needles in 1939. Canyonlands wasn't even a gleam in the eye. The formations were so amazing and the colors so wonderful. Such a contrast with the mountain grass where there was tall grass to fatten the cattle up at 9,000 feet, that you don't have in the desert. The cycles of moving the cattle back and forth between these two countries is what fascinated me."*

Mr. Lavender is a historian with the rare ability to bring history alive to his readers. He writes from personal experience as a native westerner, a young cowboy, a miner and later as a traveler and impeccable researcher and scholar of western

America. In his long career he has written some 36 books. *"I started out wanting to divide the west into a bunch of sections and write about each one and I've pretty well managed to do that with books on the Northwest, the Rockies, the Southwest, California."*

When writing history Mr. Lavender states that you have to deal with your own prejudices. *"This doesn't necessarily mean racial or sexual (prejudices). Maybe you don't like the warts on their noses. History is determined by what you put in and even more importantly by what you leave out. . . Winston Churchill said, 'History is going to be very good to me. I'm going to write it.'"*

The history Lavender writes is called narrative history, history that follows a storyline. This is why his history is such a pleasure to read and why the reader comes away learning so much. Many times you even find yourself laughing. His words paint the landscapes and characters of

the old west in such a way that you are there, exploring with Louis and Clark, traveling on the trail to Sante Fe, river running the Grand Canyon or riding horseback across the canyon country of Utah.

His books covering this part of the country are *One Man's West* and the *Southwest*. *One Man's West* was published in 1943. I was surprised to learn in our interview that Mr. Lavender began his career writing "shoot em ups" short stories about the adventure of the cowboy. *"I graduated from college during the depression and had a lot of free time so I thought I'd write a few stories and build up my bank account."*

"Well, I didn't build up my bank account but I thought I knew something about ranching and I began selling a few western stories."

With no intention doing so, Lavender found himself as a teacher at a boys preparatory school in Ojai, California. The school had courses in "outdoors, horse packing, and camping and I helped with that. The headmaster became desperate and had me fill in for a teacher that had been drafted. *"I thought I'd be there for 3 or 4 months. I stayed 27 years. But I wrote in my spare time. That's what I always wanted to do."*

He also wrote two books of fiction and a number of children's stories. Currently Mr. Lavender has some 17 books in

print.

I had heard a rumor that Mr. Lavender was writing a book on Moab and asked him about it. He at first denied it but after some prodding said, *"Yes, I was but I stopped. I looked at myself one morning and had a great revelation, a shining light came down upon me and said, 'You don't have to keep working forever.'"* After more

than a 50-year writing career, Mr. Lavender is taking a deserved break, at least for now. Nevertheless a children's book on the Donner Party is due out in the spring.

For more reading:
One Man's West
by David Lavender.

Frank Waters

by June Hall

"The Colorado river system is at once an international headache, a geographic skeleton, a hydrographic puzzle, a roll call of the most familiar names in the whole Southwest, and a symphony complete from the tiniest high pizzicato of snow-water strings to the tremendous bass of thunderous cataracts reverberating in deep canyons."

"And this last seems the ultimate task to which the Colorado is appointed by the Great Architect: to move bodily, sand by sand and peak by peak, through the measureless millenniums men call eternity, the whole great Colorado Pyramid out into the sea."

"A world, a life which even then seemed in the process of petrification. But still containing inside a hidden warmth. So watching on a winter's dawn the long queue of men plodding up the trail to the portal of a mine, a hasty stranger would be impressed only by the dominant drab-

ness. He would not wait to see, a few minutes later, the window geraniums in their tin cans glowing like tiny fires lighted by the sun."

The tendrils of Frank Waters' words swing out from the pages in electric rhythms that curl around one's brain. Like a shaman before the night fire he glides you with his chanting into your longing and affinity for earth's songs, for we and the earth are one all being made of stardust.

Like a vicar Frank Waters' litany in timeless archetypal images brushes aside the cloud of human endeavor and we stand before, become intimate with, the majesty and mystery of one of Earth's greatest creations - The Rio Colorado.

Waters spreads a "Feast of dishes" from the lives of those who have lived along its length from the Ancient Ones to engineers. We close the book well satisfied.

In Utah,
we were
burned,
bitten,
blistered,
bruised,
elevation
confused,
chafed,
parched,
skinned-up,
sore,
and
happy!

John R. Graham
1990

Elzy J. Bird

Artist and Author

by Dick Negri

An artist and author, Elzy J. Bird, lives in Midvale, Utah where he is winding up the composition of his latest book, *Slickrock Country*. He was born in Salt Lake City in 1911 and studied art at the University of Utah with J.T. Harwood. He also attended the Chinoard School of Art in Los Angeles. Subsequent to that he went to work at Walt Disney Studios.

The State of Utah beckoned and he returned there to serve as the Director of the Works Project Administration (WPA) Federal Art Project from 1937-1942. While in this capacity he supervised a mural reproduction of the Great Gallery pictograph panel in Barrier, now known as Horseshoe Canyon. More about the mural project later.

During the second World War he served in the Army Corps of Engineers and saw duty during the Okinawa Campaign. After the war he worked as a draftsman/designer for various architectural firms until he retired in 1977.

Mr. Bird's art works may be viewed in the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts and in many Utah schools and private collections. His published writings, all of which he illustrated, were published by Carolrhoda Publishers of Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Ten*

Tall Tales (1984) is a collection of tales of the desert, some of the tales by Buck Lee a cowboy artist and story teller. *Chuckwagon Stew* (1988) are tall tales that were prompted by the author's interview with the outlaw Matt Warner, a member of the Wild Bunch and rode with Butch Cassidy. Other stories in *Chuckwagon Stew* are unrelated to Matt Warner and are centered in Idaho's Snake River Country. *How Do Bear's Sleep?* (1989) is a children's book of a lengthy poem and many illustrations. *The Blizzard of 1896* (1990) is a selection of nine contemporary characters who were asked that they picture themselves as residents of ranches when that devastating blizzard struck the western states. Imagination played a major role in the fabrication of the stories related by each of the participants. *Slickrock Country* (in production) is based on personal experiences of the author in poetry, prose, fiction and non-fiction including a detailed account of the Barrier Canyon mural painting project.

Earlier it was mentioned that I would return to the subject of the WPA Federal Art Project. To my knowledge there have been two major threats to remove the panel, or a portion

thereof, that houses the Great Gallery of pictographs in Horseshoe Canyon. There probably have been other incidents perhaps of equal magnitude that have been obscured by time.

One of these episodes occurred when Lou Chaffin had the idea of cutting the panel from the canyon wall and shipping it off to the World's Fair. Arrangements were made to proceed



Cowboy by Elzy J. Bird, artwork to be seen in upcoming book *Slickrock Country*.

with the cutting and a bank had agreed to make a loan to underwrite the expense of shipping the exhibit to the fair.

Lou's son, Ned Chaffin, related that Lou's principal motivation for sending the pictographs to the World's Fair was that it would enable millions of people to view and admire the Indian Art rather than the bare handful of visitors who wended their way into Horseshoe Canyon each year. Lou was also convinced the panel would suffer from vandalism over the years, and some of that has certainly taken place.

Fortunately, Lou called it off after deciding the potential risks involved with transporting the delicate art work across the country by rail were too great. When I first heard this I'll have to admit I wondered what he thought about hauling it up the horrendous routes from the canyon floor to the rims above.



Barrier Canyon artwork by Elzy J. Bird.

In June of 1940 the aforementioned WPA Art Project dispatched a preliminary survey team to Horseshoe Canyon. Its duty was to lay the groundwork necessary for a painting to be made of the mural. The reproduction was to be completed for a January 1941 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The survey team finished its work and returned to Salt Lake City. In that September a team of artists accompanied by Robert M. Jones, a commercial photographer, began the task of creating the mural. Mr. Jones wrote a report of the main expedition. He titled it "Barrier Canyon Remembered", but it had very limited distribution.

The artist team was supervised by Elzy J. Bird and was responsible for taking careful measurements and drawing on-site illustrations of the pictographs.

Viewers to the panel may notice chalk marks made in one foot increments along the base of the panel; those chalk marks were placed there by Mr. Bird and other members of the art group in order to help them establish scale sketches and photographs.

The actual work was on prepared awning canvas painted with "egg tempera" in a building in Salt Lake. It also was painted on two canvasses; one 12' high x 66' long and the other 12' high x 20' long. One of them is on display at the Utah Mu-

seum of Natural History and the other is on display in the Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum in Price.

A footnote by Elzy Bird... "Those of you who are familiar with the beautiful panel of pictographs in Barrier Canyon will remember the large figure called the Holy Ghost with the attending smaller figures. Later, I found shattered pieces of stone with the red pictograph paint scattered at the foot of the panel. Lee Tidwell told me the following story:

"Once when I was ridin' in the canyon I heard a loud explosion. I gave my horse the spurs and wound up at the big panel. There were a couple of oil men there and they had just blasted off a piece of the wall with dynamite - just to the left of what you call the "Holy Ghost." They had destroyed several of the figures and you can see what's left of them on the ground. I'd brought my old 30-30 saddle gun with me and I jerked it out. I told them to get the hell out of there or I'd let them have it. They left without any trouble."

Copies of Mr. Elzy's report about the expedition to copy the mural may be obtained from the University of Utah's Marriot Library.

Pearl Baker: The Legend and the Lady

by Barbara Ekker

The following is an excerpt from Pearl Baker's obituary which ran in the December 24, 1992 issue of *The Times-Independent*

Mrs. Pearl Biddlecome Baker, 85, passed away the 19th of December 1992 at the Castle Country Care Center in Price. She was a noted western writer and historian, and the owner of the famed Robber's Roost Ranch in northeastern Wayne County.

It doesn't seem like she no longer will be sitting in her comfy chair at the Castle Country Care Center in Price, where she'd greet every visitor with the same bubbly enthusiasm she had in her youth when she was growing up at the Robber's Roost. Her many bouts with medical problems didn't slow her down. She would jokingly say, "Now that I've got the hand of this growing old, I'll probably live forever." Pearl was like a Timex watch. She could take a lickin' and keep on tickin'.

Around her room items of her life were stacked: boxes of her book *The Wild Bunch at Robber's Roost*, now in its fourth printing since she wrote it in 1965. She was autographing them to mail out after reading so many letters of request. The nursing home personnel would dart in and out to tend to her needs and introduce them to her visitors and praise their caring and comfort during her stay there.

Pearl authored many books. Her parents, the late Joe and Millie Biddlecome, were featured in *Robber's Roost Recollections* and



Pearl Baker
as a young woman.

Courtesy of Robbers Roost Recollections.

tells of her growing up there with her sister Hazel (Ekker). She was 18-months old when she was perched on a pillow behind the saddle horn of her mother's horse as they trailed cattle from Green River into this vast desert in southeastern Utah. Things were hard for the family as they'd lost a daughter, May, while in Green River residing in a tent along the river as no housing was available due to the 1906 land boom in Green River.

Pearl was born August 5, 1907. Her dad passed away in 1928 following a simple tonsillectomy. Pearl and her husband, Mel Marsing, bought the ranch rights from her mom and Hazel, who would later lease their share of the estate cattle to Art Murray, who trailed them to Dead Horse Point. Just two months after the transaction, Mel died of blood poisoning from a bruise, leaving Pearl with two sons, Joe and Jack, and a ranch to run.

These were the darkest days of the Depression years. Then she met and married James Baker, and sold her cattle to her sister, Hazel, and her husband Arthur Ekker. The Bakers moved to Oregon, where her third son, Noel, was born.

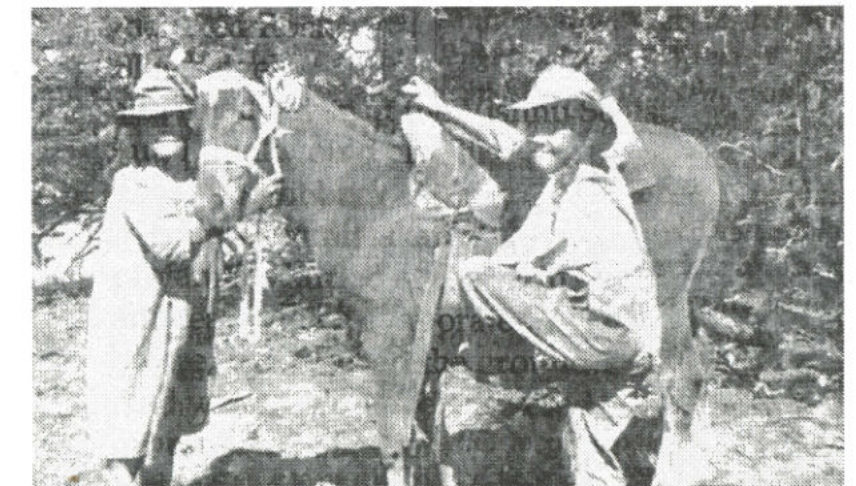
Four years later she separated and brought her three sons back to Green River and at Hiite, ran the Flying Diamond Restaurant (this was her cattle brand also), worked on a newspaper in Tremonton, and was a representative for Utah Woolen Mills. She turned her home and lot into a trailer park called the "Sage and Sand," was president of the Green River Woman's Club, and president of the Green River Chamber of Commerce. As a member of the Castle Country council she wrote brochures to promote the country she knew better than anyone. She was instrumental in obtaining a library after the City Building it was housed in was destroyed by fire. She became the first Library Chairman and was able to also begin funding for other libraries in Emery County. Her mother was the first librarian in Green River in the basement of the bank building, which also housed the jail. She was secretary of the Utah Cattle Growers Association, and braided horsehair hatbands to give to persons who gave outstanding service to the association.

She was on the Green River planning and zoning committee when she retired. But she never quit her writing through all these other service projects. She wrote, *Rim Flying Canyonlands* with Jim Hurst, and *Hookers in Alaska* about Dr. Keith Hookers, the bush pilot/doctor from Alaska. There were also numerous magazine and newspaper articles that covered the Spanish Trail, the Colorado and Green River, which started earlier with

her first book, *Trail of the Water*, the story of pioneer river runner Burt Loper.

She chased down wild horse stories, trapping adventures, and Indian lore. Her book on *The Outlaw of San Juan County* was the story of the Piute Indian Posey. She later wrote *Through the Sipapu*, a Canyonlands Fantasy.

Pearl always loved a good story and her sons were always bringing home these stories. These consisted of cowboy yarns and real life anecdotes, which she would write down immediately so as not to forget the punch line. Her own true life story was about her father, Joe. He left Pinon Mesa with 30 head of grown cows, 40 head of yearling heifers, and about as many calves, not counting the eight head trailing the three milk cows. This was quite a calf crop considering her dad had only two yearling bulls.



Pearl and her sister Hazel with the mare named Pet. Hazel is pretending to mount up as Pearl holds on the the horse.

Courtesy of Robbers Roost Recollections.

Family meant a lot to Pearl. She savored every visit from her sons and their families, and from her nieces and nephews, children of her sister Hazel.

What a wee part of a person's life is in their acts, their words. A person's real life is always in their own head, known only to themselves. All day long the brain is grinding out thoughts and ideas. These thoughts are a person's life and can never be written down by others.

We who tell the stories of others are just the clothes and buttons and the true history of anyone can never be really written with truth and call it so. Pearl's 85 years would indeed make a book but who of us is qualified for that task.

For more reading:

Robbers Roost Recollections, by Pearl Baker. University of Utah Press, 1976.

The following editorial was written by Sam Taylor, co-editor and co-publisher of *The Times-Independent* and was published in his weekly column Community Comments in the December 24, 1992 issue of *The Times-Independent*.

Thoughts this week ought to be on the coming holiday. It is the season, as they say. And in our household, it will be a happy occasion, filled with laughter, visiting friends and lots of family, serious talk, gifting and reflections on the true meaning of the day.

My thoughts, though, have been elsewhere all week. It started with an early morning phone call Monday from old high school and college friend, Barbara Ekker from Hanksville, informing me that our mutual close friend, Pearl Baker, had died on Saturday in Price. My thoughts have gone from one special remembrance to another — all gathered over a span of nearly forty years.

Although Pearl had written extensively for *The Times-Independent* prior to my involvement here, I had not personally met her when I took over during the summer of 1956, although I had heard my father refer to her on many occasions prior to that.

Shortly after I arrived on the job, she made her first visit to the T-I office.

"If you are Sam Taylor, I'm here to say howdy. I'm Pearl Baker," she said.

My startled response was, "Well, I'll be damned." I had heard so much about this living

legend that I couldn't contain my surprise at seeing her in person.

"That's a hell of a way to greet a lady," she said. Thus started a friendship that spanned four decades, and shortly thereafter included my wife and partner, Adrien.

We worked together on a lot of projects. I heard a lot of her stories. I read a lot of her manuscripts and was invited to make comments. A lot of them never saw print, and some of those were the best. Pearl was a one who called a spade a shovel, and I loved her for it. Her opinions of those around her were wonderful, if not always printable. You were either on her good list or her bad list, rarely in between. Thankfully we were almost always on the good one. Even today, as I put together this weekly column, I am wearing one of two matching crocheted vests Pearl made for Adrien and me, decorated with authentic Indian rock art reproductions from Barrier Canyon in the Maze, not far from her beloved Robber's Roost Ranch.

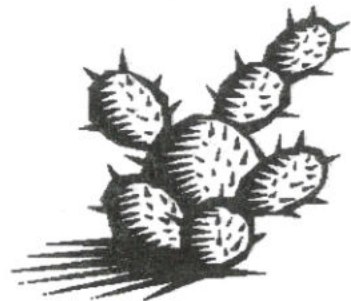
The first eighty of Pearl's eighty five years were great ones, even tough ones. The last five years, most of which were spent in a Price nursing home couldn't have been all that pleasant, although she kept busy and

rarely complained.

I had lot of choices for artwork to go with Barbara's personal obituary printed in this issue. My choices finally were not of the Pearl I knew, nor the Pearl that adorned the jackets of her many books. They were the Pearl I had heard about and read about almost all of my life. They had been left in Pearl's personal photo file in *The Times* office. Pearl loved the Robber's Roost country. She adored her parents, Joe and Millie Biddlecome and her sister Hazel Ekker. Joe had to have been one of the toughest of the tough in a wild Southeastern Utah of the early 1900s. But to his two daughters, he was the greatest of all Dads.

Those early growing-up days north of the Dirty Devil River must have been rough and wild days. But what memories they must have left.

So long, Pearl. It's been my privilege and pleasure to have been counted a friend by a real lady of the west.



Writing Their Hearts Out: Women Writing on the Colorado Plateau

by Janet Lowe

As the moon struggled its way over the rim, we talked of poetry and where it comes from. It comes from here, from the bottom of the world, I said. It's in the silt that rushes through the Colorado River, it's in the bat that dives at us; it's in the scorpion you chased off your sleeping bag last night.

But how do you get from here to there? you asked.

Well, you have to taste the silt, baptize yourself in the water, let the bat breeze against your hair and hold your breath while the scorpion traces a path across your cheek, I said. You have to make this stuff — the red rock, the pool, the mice — your own. You get it by leaving behind some of yourself — your sweat, your urine, your blood, little flecks of skin caught on the rock or in the cactus. Then it's yours and you can write about it.

Oh, I see, you said, grabbing the moon and trying to swallow it.

Conversation at Hermit Rapids, Grand Canyon, April 1989

I have forgotten why I'm here. Locked in the mechanical

whirlwind of intellect, I have misplaced my passion for the wild red rock canyons, the mountains, and the rapids that are the Colorado Plateau. I am trapped in my own head dreading the sunlight that means another day, fearing the dark that means another night alone with my damned introspection.

My brain has run off with my soul and holds it captive. It is now I learn it is my soul that knows the Entrada sandstone under my feet, that elevates it from a geologic layer to something as mystical as love. A salmon sunset and pomegranate alpenglow from the La Sal Mountains is also lost in the electrical maze of brain power. The color cannot reach my heart. There is a raven screaming that I cannot see. I am lost.

Terry Tempest Williams would blame it on coyote who howls from the rim, finally claiming victory over the silly woman from Kansas who thought she could make the desert her own. In a frenzy, I pull out my notebooks from the last 10 years searching for the entry of my first visit to Arches National Park, Eye of the Whale,

the first tortuous climb to Delicate Arch in July, or my first ascent to Gold Knob in the La Sals. I fling and crumple the pages of my life frantically. They lay scattered around me, the detritus of living.



I am in direct and intense contact with the earth. It challenges me and if I treat it with respect, and am tenacious in meeting the challenge, I am rewarded by feeling at home. It gives me back a feeling of comfort, familiarity and belonging. This love of landscape can only be breathed in, can only be absorbed through the senses. It is a splendor and beauty felt first in your bones and then in your soul. It courses through the body like this river that runs before me.

Colorado River Canyon near Moab, August, 1990

If my own words won't work or if I find them and do not believe them, I have the paragraphs and poems of other women who have clamored over these Southeastern Utah rocks, braved the rapids and then written their hearts out. Writers like Terry Tempest Williams, Ann Zwinger, Ann Walka and Ellen Meloy take our wonder and turn it into something expressible and manageable for us.

They take the "O" formed by our awestruck lips and spread it across the page creating a literature born of love. As sisters in the canyons they crawl into our hearts when speech has left us at the river's edge and give us a language that expresses our fears, passions, and struggles.

They take the broad platinum sunset reflected in our pupils and dictate words that express the light when we are in the dark. When the beauty brings tears to our eyes, the tears are wiped dry with their words. They give our voices song when the melody has fallen silent. Thank God for these women. Their writing has the power to mend hearts that have been broken by living.

Women are exploring their primitive, wild selves in the landscape and daring to write about these experiences as never before—boldly, engaging all the body and touching all the love and all the terror that moves through us.

We are all struggling with ourselves—women and men—and with our roles, redefining our sense of "female" and "male" as we approach the millennium. In the last two decades

men and women have been shaken up, snapped like sheets in the wind and ripped apart. Our roles in society and our very place in American culture has come unraveled. The threads are tangled and knotted and tumble through the desert before being plucked off the ground by a bird and deposited in a nest, forevermore unavailable for weaving a new fabric of female or male.

What we thought we'd find at the top of the career ladder wasn't there after all. What we hoped we would discover in marriage and children eluded us. And now we turn back toward that which we can bear in a world gone a bit mad.

We seem to understand the rock, the reliability of it, its immutable form beneath us when the rest of the world rattles and beeps and flies around us via fiber optics, satellite dish and other inexplicable technologies. While this controlled, relentless motion hums around us, the rock remains beneath our feet.

The surprise we find in the color of sunset is a surprise we can bear. It is not the sudden confusing burst of new technology or the stunning shock of cruelty that humans inflict upon one another. It is the surprise of light and colors that we have never imagined because they are unimaginable.

Through landscape and writing about landscape we find a common link, one that is universal, old as the earth. When we connect through this literature, ancient memories written in our bodies are called forth and we are collectively calmed and can collectively love. Terry Tem-

pest Williams writes in *An Unspoken Hunger*, "I too can bring my breath down to dwell in a deeper place where my blood-soul restores to my body what society has drained and dredged away."

The voices of women writers are diverse, the songs ranging from soft ballads to blistering blues, and well-executed arias. Though there are many voices echoing throughout canyons, we hear only a few. They are voices that will not be ignored. They write about the biology, botany, geology, anthropology, archaeology, sociology



-science and study of all variety—embroider it with the emotion that is bound to surface when you walk the canyons, float the rivers, and climb the mountains of the Plateau.

Women writers infuse their works with a nurturing heart and sensuality that is distinctly feminine in character. The older I get the more I understand how dissimilar we are from men. It is not that women are better than

men or the reverse, but just that we are very, very different. In reading the works of women writers on the subject of landscape, these differences click into sharp focus. Our verbs invoke all that we are: nurturing mothers, tenacious laborers or bawdy, belching, sexy women. The sound of the words and the structure of the sentences are decidedly feminine, reflecting the shape of our bodies. Our motions as women find their way into our literature; our fluid movements our thrusts, and the hard contractions of birthing all find their way to the page. Rituals that women have founded or participated in for centuries reveal themselves in our metaphors. Our words come from kitchens, fields, gardens, birthing rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms, from our mirrors and from our bodies. They are the color and shape of women.

"The rapids tumble with plumes and curls of white, the white of opalescent moonstone," writes Ellen Meloy in *Raven's Exile*. In "A Woman's Dance" from *Coyote's Canyon*, Williams writes: "Her hands, like serpents, encouraged primal sounds as she arched forward and back with the grasses. She was the wind that inspired change....The woman stepped outside the circle and kissed the palms of her hands and placed them on the earth....And the woman who came to the desert to dance simply ran her fingers through in her long, black hair and smiled."

Ann Walka in her poem "Living by the River" describes the geology in this way: "Rock layers shine/or soften into shadow/breath like lace/into the hot night." And Ann Zwinger in

Downcanyon writes of "Vishnu Schist like marble cake batter, swirled in ribbons and stripes." Kitchens, bedrooms, mirrors.

These are "women words" resplendent with our passion for life. The passion screams from the pages of our books. Our lust for the land is as exposed as the geology. From Williams' *Desert Quartet*, "The silence that lives in these sacred hallways presses against me. I relax. I surrender. I close my eyes. The arousal of my breath rises in me like music, like love, as the possessive muscles between my legs tighten and release. I come to the rock in moment of stillness, giving and receiving, where there is no partition between body and the body of earth."

What consistently reveals itself in the writing of women is heart. What is revealed is that we are unafraid of the struggle that arises within ourselves as a result of having heart, of walking a path with heart, of walk-

ing the slickrock with our hearts as naked as our bodies in the desert sun.

It becomes equally apparent that we are unafraid of the physical challenge we impose upon our bodies and minds as we push our own believable limits on the river, in the canyons with packs strapped to our backs, or in our books.

And yes, the heart co-exists with the paleontologist, the scientist, the geologist, the teacher, writer, mother, worker bees and leader bees of all varieties; however, it is the heart of women that leads in our writing as it so often does in our lives. It is our hearts that fall in love with the land.

As Williams writes in *Unspoken Hunger*, "There is nothing intellectual about it. We love the land. It is a primal affair." And a page later in the same essay: "There is no defense against an open heart and a supple body in dialogue with wildness. Internal strength is an absorption of the external landscape. We are informed by beauty, raw and sensual. Through an erotics of place



our sensitivity becomes our sensibility."

I am washing my feet in the de Chelly wash. My son plays nearby, his skin coated with sand, his hair changed in color from the water. The walls rise in sheets of heat around us. A man in a straw hat approaches and squats at my feet. "I can do that for you," he says. I let him. He massages each toe and uses his thumbs to stretch the tight muscles in my sole. I remember we talked about something important, though the subject is no longer clear. Afterward, he dried my feet with the kerchief from his neck and said goodbye. Zach and I walked over to White House Ruins and then out of the canyon. It was the 4th of July and I remember thinking, "there is magic in the desert."

July 4, 1988,
Canyon de Chelly, Arizona

Once in the desert I am held together by the pressure of the rock, the warmth of the sun, the fragrance of the juniper and sage. Do not grieve my going.

December 1990,
in Kansas City before the move west

Today I felt my heart open to the colors of the sunset, of the rock. I felt it open as wide as the horizon and bound like a mule deer across the sage flats. I sit and collect the power of the sun. I am collecting light that will defeat the dark.

Sand Flats Road
February, 1993

I feel something cracking. With each word I read, with each word I write the sound grows louder. It is accompanied by a wrenching feeling in my chest that reverberates throughout my body. As long as I read, as long as I write, it will

not go away. I have a choice to feel or not to feel; I have a choice to walk the path or simply stop. When it's this dark, there is always hesitation but, once again, I turn the page of the book. Once again, I take up the pen.

December 6, 1995

Dear Kris —

Terry Tempest Williams lit a large bundle of dried sage leaves and our last session in her nonfiction workshop had begun. We had finished our Sunday morning breakfast at Pack Creek Ranch at the Desert Writers' Conference, the year 1988, the time the leaves were turning yellow, in October. We were seated on the grass near the main lodge under one of those large cottonwoods with yellow leaves. We were there to read our autobiographies she has assigned to us to write.

I felt lucky to have written mine as I had no place to write it that last night. I couldn't do it in my small tent, but fortunately the lodge stayed open that evening while the workers in the kitchen washed dishes and prepared for the Sunday breakfast. Another writer and myself were the only ones there and we wrote away in the quietness we found and the light.

We knew the one she liked best would get the sage bundle, that was the prize, and she told us that again in a little bit of ceremony and motioned to the woman seated on her right to begin with hers. The reading continued around to me. I prized most of all freedom, I read at the beginning of my autobiography, and that was my approach to what followed.

The last to read was Terry Tempest, who ended with a strong statement that it was freedom she prized most. I felt shocked as we were the only two that made that statement so directly, she at the end, mine at the beginning. She sat nearest the tree, so intense, articulate; she tried to put out the light of the smoking sage, looked in my direction with compassion and to the surprise of everyone tossed me the sage.

I don't remember what happened then, this was just a moment of joy for all, our workshop had ended, she was leaving, our emotions at that time were so strong with her.

Sincerely,
Herbert Steiner

Zane Grey : Master Romance Storyteller of the West

by Kris Taylor

Rainbow Bridge, a sacred place to the Navajo people called Nonnezoshe, is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. If you search carefully, you will find etched under a stone crevice behind the the bridge the name of Zane Grey.

The author was a part of the second non-scientific party of white men to travel to the sacred site in 1913. He accompanied John Wetherhill, the "discoverer" of Rainbow Bridge. They rode horses from Monument Valley and climbed treacherous mountain trails to reach the natural bridge named "Rainbow" by the Navajos for colors that seem to change throughout the day.

In his book *The Rainbow Trail*, the sequel to the epic Western *Riders of the Purple Sage*, Grey describes Rainbow Bridge, perhaps detailing the same emotions and thoughts he had when he first viewed the natural wonder through the eyes of his main character Shefford.

"The rainbow bridge was the one great natural phenomenon, the one grand spectacle, which Shefford had ever seen that did not at first give vague disappointment, a confounding of reality, a disenchantment of contrast with what the mind had conceived.

But this thing was glorious. It silenced him, yet did not awe or stun. His body and brain, weary and dull from the toil of travel, received

a singular and revivifying freshness. He had a strange, mystic perception of this rosy-hued stupendous arch of stone, as if in a former life it had been a goal he could not reach. This wonder of nature, though all-satisfying, all-fulfilling to his artist's soul, could not be a resting-place for him, a destination where something awaited him, a height he must scale to find peace, the end of his strife. But it seemed all these. He could not understand his perception or his emotion. Still, here at last, apparently, was the rainbow of his boyish dreams and of his manhood - a rainbow magnified even beyond those

dreams, no longer transparent and ethereal, but solidified, a thing of ages, sweeping up majestically from the red wall, its iris-hued arch against the blue sky."

During the years 1910 and 1930, Zane Grey was the most widely read author living and was considered a household name throughout the United States and the Western world. His books were on the best seller list nine times between the years 1915 and 1924. The most popular of all his novels was *Riders of the Purple Sage*, which sold 27



"I'll never go again, Bess."

Drawing by Douglas Duer, Courtesy of *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

million copies in 27 years from the time when it was written in 1912 to the time of Grey's death in 1939. The book is still available, now in its 10th printing.

Biographer Ann Ronald estimated that well over 250 million people have played as an audience to Grey's work through reprints, serializations, translations and movie versions of Grey's novels. He was the master of romantic storytelling, bringing forth heroic men and women who struggle in a harsh wilderness against evil men and yet seem to find love and success by the end of the novel.

Zane Grey was born in Zanesville, Ohio in 1872, a town which was named for frontiersman and ancestor, Colonel Ebenezer Zane. He went to the University of Pennsylvania on a baseball scholarship and became a dentist like his father. Writing on the side, he published his first novel *Betty Zane* in 1902 at age 30. The story was of Colonel Zane's sister Betty, who ran through British gunfire to bring gunpowder wrapped in her apron to the Revolutionary soldiers at Fort Henry on the Ohio River.

Zane used the same setting for his next two books *Spirit of the Border* and *The Last Trail* which were published in 1906. After the publication of what was called the "Ohio River Trilogy," Grey left dentistry and went to work as a writer.

His fascination with the West

occurred during a 1907 hunting trip in Arizona, spawning the books *The Last of the Plainsman* (1908), *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910) and then the most famous of all his novels *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912).

Riders of the Purple Sage, set in Southeastern Utah in a fictional town named Stonebridge tells the story of a gunman named Lassiter who was in search of the polygamist who stole away and forced Milly Erne to submit to wiving which led to a tragic death. He meets and loves Jane Withersteen, a Mormon woman who is torn between loyalty to her religion and the dictates of her own conscience.

Lassiter was known for his physical heroics, as a fighter, as a gunman, as a horseman, and as a cattleman. Jane matched Lassiter in emotional heroics through her compassion, integrity and honesty. Her strong female character is central to the story, showing the conflict between "living religion" and "obeying a church." Through these characters, and those of Bess and Bern Venters, the book *Riders of the Purple Sage* reached the level of myth by illustrating the human condition.

In 1915, Grey continued the story of *Riders of the Purple Sage* in the sequel *The Rainbow Trail*. In the foreward, Grey tells of the relationship between the two stories: "The spell of the desert comes back to me, as it always will come. I see the veils, like purple

smoke, in the cañons, and I feel the silence. And it seems that again I must try to pierce both and to get at the strange wild life of the last American wilderness - wild still, almost as it ever was.

While this romance is an independent story, yet readers of the *Riders of the Purple Sage* will find in it an answer to a question often asked.

I wish to say also that this story has appeared serially in a different form in one of the monthly magazines under the title of "The Desert Crucible."

Zane Grey, June 1915"

The story continued through the character Fay Larkin, the adopted child of Jane Withersteen. Nearly forced into polygamy, a former clergyman turned wanderer named John Shefford comes to her rescue after hearing the story of Lassiter and Withersteen from Bern Venters. Accompanied by the wise and loyal Navajo Nas Ta Bega and the young and compassionate Mormon Joe Lake, Fay is rescued from polygamy by traveling through the harsh canyons of Southeastern Utah.

The stories of John Wesley Powell's rivertrips of 1869 and 1871 through Cataract Canyon must have played a role in the writing of the climatic ending of *The Rainbow Trail*. Shefford, Fay, Lassiter, Jane, Nas Te Bega and Joe Lake take an amazing ride through the rapids of Cataract Canyon to Lee's Ferry. Grey described Cataract Canyon through the eyes of Shefford.

"And Shefford saw an awful place before them. The cañon had narrowed to half its width, and turned almost at right angles. The huge clamor of appalling sound came from under the cliff where the swollen river had to pass and where there was not space. The rapid rushed in gigantic swells right up on the wall, boomed against it, climbed and spread and fell away, to recede and gather new impetus, to leap madly on down the cañon." And, true to a romance, they make it through safely without having to portage!

Both books, *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *The Rainbow Trail* place an emphasis on religion that may have originated from Grey's childhood, being the son of a lay-preacher. While the Mormon elders were positioned as "the bad guys," Grey focuses more on the danger of an autocracy than on the supposed evils of Mormonism. With the exception of polygamy, any religious leader could have been in the positions of the Elder Tull and Bishop Dyer.

Grey sides with the Mormon women, seeing them as good and kind, though misguided and tragic.

In *The Rainbow Trail*, through the character Joe Lake, Grey tells of a noble younger generation of Mormons who would turn away from polygamy.

Shefford found his own religion and the meaning of life at Rainbow Bridge.

"Hours afterward Shefford walked alone to and fro under the bridge. His trouble had given place to serenity. But this night of nights

he must live out wide-eyed to its end.

The moon had long since crossed the streak of starfired blue above and the cañon was black in shadow. At times a current of wind, with all the strangeness of that strange country in its hollow moan, rushed through the great stone arch. At other times there was silence such as Shefford imagined dwelt deep under this rocky world. At still other times an owl hooted, the sound was nameless. But it had a mocking echo that never ended. An echo of night, silence, gloom, melancholy, death, age eternity!

The Indian lay asleep with his dark face upturned, and the other sleepers lay calm and white in the starlight.

Shefford saw in them the meaning of life and the past - the illimitable train of faces that had shone under the stars. There was a spirit in the cañon, and whether or not it

was what the Navajo embodied in the great Nonnezoshe, or the life of the present, or the death of the ages, or the nature so magnificently manifested in those silent, dreaming, waiting walls - the truth for Shefford was that this spirit was God.

Life was eternal. Man's immortality lay in himself. Love of a woman was hope - happiness. Brotherhood - that mystic and grand "Bi Nai!" of the Navajo - that was religion."

Grey told the story of the West in more just gunfights, cattlemen, and horses. He told the story of the blood and the sweat that is shed in loving the harsh land of sage and sand. He told the story of religion born in sacrifice and spirituality found in the canyons, the star-filled skies and even the humble sego-lily. Zane Grey told stories of the human soul, never forgetting that the soul of the West laid in the land itself.

The spring in the following poem actually flows near Moab, Utah on Highway 128 near the Colorado River Bridge. Shown on a map, the spring is listed as Matrimony Springs, however Moab people refer to it as River Springs. The legend of the spring is that once you drink from the spring you will return again and again, hence the following poem by E.R.(Russ) Carter.

Spring with a Legend

There's a Spring that flows
near the River's Bridge
from Sand Stone rocks
'neath the rocky ridge

They say to drink from this River Spring
That you will return to drink again and again.
Well I drank from this Spring a long time ago -
I never did go.

Next Issue

Co-editor David Williams is producing the 1996 Spring issue of the Canyon Legacy, which will focus on the La Sal Mountains. No articles are needed for the Sierra de la Sal issue and it will be available at the Dan O'Laurie Museum and area bookstores in early Spring.

Upcoming Events at the Museum

Speaker Series

The Dan O'Laurie Museum speaker series are held at the Moab Information Center on the corner of Center and Main Streets at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, January 24, 1996 Jim Blazik present a lecture on the Barrier Canyon Art.
February 15, 1996 Betty Stanton will present a lecture and slideshow on S.E. Utah's Film History.
February 28, 1996, Geologist Gene Stevenson will present a lecture and slideshow on structural geology.

Artists of the Month

Several local artists will be featured in the upstairs gallery during the months of January and February.

Displays

The temporary exhibit for January is devoted to equipment that kept housewives busy before perma-press and often before electricity. Flatirons, sadirons, and gasoline irons are only a few of the collectors items on display. Along with a washtub and washboard, the museum has a washing machine patented in 1889 that consists of a tub in a metal box which was hand cranked.

Other

Friends of the Museum meet 7:00 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month at the Dan O'Laurie Museum.
Board Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month at the Dan O'Laurie Museum.

The Dan O'Laurie Museum

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Monday through Thursday

3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturdays

1:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Spring Hours

Monday through Saturday

1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

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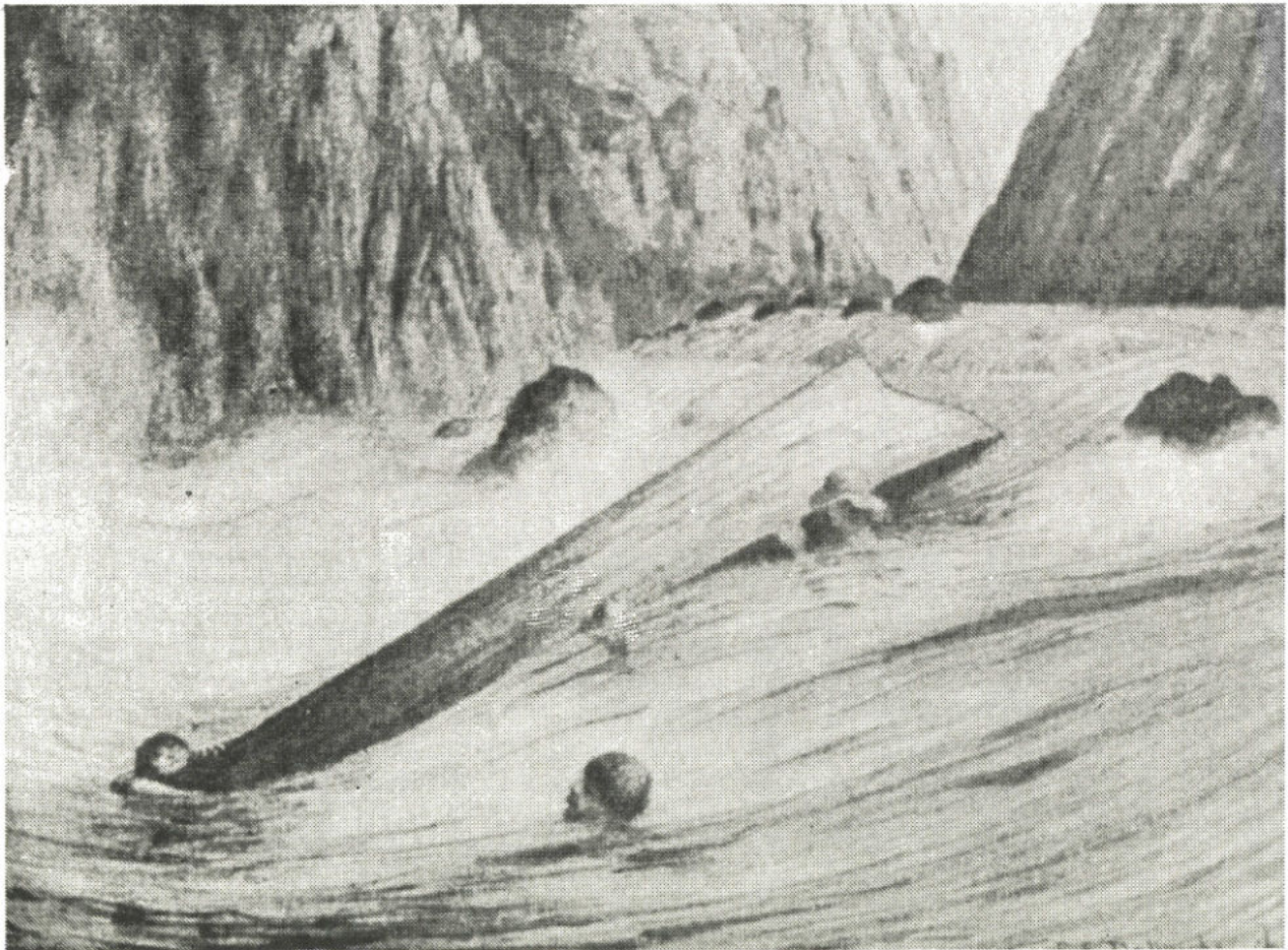
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Capsize in Grand Canyon.

Drawing by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh. Courtesy of Romance of the Colorado River



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