

BEAR TRACK



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HIKING CLUB

FEBRUARY, 1963

CHRISTMAS IN THE GLEN CANYON

by Phil Pennington

The Glen Canyon in winter was an unknown to us until several weeks ago. Now, three trips to the Glen have been made since the beginning of Christmas vacation, and the canyon seems even more unpredictable.

Six bay area students made the trip during Christmas vacation ---Margaret Young and Jim Richardson from Stanford and John Dalton, Art Knoebel, Keturah Gashwiler and myself from U. C. The town of Escalante, Utah had been having months of summer weather. When we got there a heavy snow was falling, but as we drove the 65 miles out to the desert landmark of Hole in the Rock, the snow changed to a light drizzle. It was at Hole in the Rock, one of the most remote roadheads in the country, that we were to put our boats into the Colorado River - 1200 feet below! The job of packing down 3 kyaks, 2 rubber rafts and about 100 pounds of gear per person took the better part of a day. Since the cars had to be driven now to the take-out point, Kane Creek, some 46 river miles, and 200 road miles, away, our river trip wasn't to start for another day. On arriving at the Kane Creek road we were surprised to find that since September, the area had acquired camels, castles, crosses (with people), a lion, hundreds of tents with false patches, white donkeys, and row upon row of bright yellow outhouses. Hollywood had moved in to make a film on the life of Christ.

However, we were soon separated from all this frenzied activity by miles of high mesas interspersed with mazes of deep narrow canyons, and were getting off the plane at Hole in the Rock. In a couple of hours we were back on the river, with the smooth red sandstone walls all around us and the reddish-brown water of the Colorado quietly flowing past.

Even though there was frost on the kyaks the next morning, the days were warm enough to go barefoot - for a while. We usually traveled in three groups - Margaret and Jim in their two-man fold-boat, Art and John each in "two-man" rubber rafts, and Keturah and I in individual kyaks. Music Temple was to be the next campsite. Here on a sandy shore of a small pool fed by a waterfall and sur-

rounded by ferns growing out of the rock, the walls close in several hundred feet overhead to form a natural music hall complete with fine acoustics. The next few days were spent exploring Mystery Canyon, a short hike terminated by a beautiful waterfall and pool, Serpentine Canyon, a run-of-the-mill Glen Canyon spectacular side canyon (anywhere else, Serpentine Canyon would seem most fascinating; in the Glen it is quite low on the list of interesting canyons), Twilight Canyon, the deepest of the side canyons, and always strangely quiet, much like the streets of a large city early on a Sunday morning echoing only one's footsteps, and Cathedral Canyon, explored by only Keturah and myself, who were equipped with wetsuits, which were necessary to appreciate the consistently narrow canyon with its many deep pools and small waterfalls.

The evening of the 23rd of December treated us to a beautiful sunset and on the morning of the 24th the weather had suddenly changed from warm and sunny to the Glen Canyon's worst. By mid-morning the very heavy snow had turned to a drenching downpour.

All the numerous gullies and hanging canyons were spouting water and we, safe and comfortable in a deep cave facing the river, were surrounded by waterfalls, large and small, some several hundred feet high. Art and John had meanwhile taken refuge in a high alcove above Aztec Creek, near Rainbow Bridge, in order to avoid flash floods, and Jim and Margaret were comfortably located in a Park Service tent at the mouth of Aztec Creek. By afternoon the sky had cleared and another swimming canyon, Corner Stone, was explored. That night, Christmas Eve, we found a small deep alcove overlooking a bend in the river which was easily heated by our fire. Christmas morning dawned bright and clear - and the ground outside was covered with snow. The temperature was starting to drop and it had snowed early that night. That day Keturah and I explored False Entrance Canyon, a very narrow, spectacular canyon involving considerable deep wading and swimming. Even though on the Colorado River banks things were generally frozen, the heat from the rock seemed to keep the water in the side canyons considerably warmer. They never froze where they were deep and narrow. However, while walking out of False Entrance, we found the coveralls we wore over our wet suits were freezing solid. That night the river started to get ice forming along the banks and the following night, at Rock Creek, we heard a strange swishing sound, like the surf. That morning we were surprised to find the river about 3/4 covered with floating ice! We considered trying to get down to the car at Kane Creek that night to avoid the possibility of having the river frozen from bank to bank, but decided against it and hiked up to the Indian sites in Rock Creek where we found extensive petroglyphs that looked like a Moqui Indian kindergarten blackboard. Most of these 800-1000 year old drawings appeared to be drawn by a small child, but there were also three fine drawings of sheep.

When we put in the river the next morning with the ice, we found that paddling around, through and up on top of the ice blocks was fun! The rafts, which had now joined us, were having little trouble except when the river narrowed so as to make the surface solid moving ice. The last canyon we were to explore was a left bank canyon 3/4 mile above West Canyon Creek, an exceptionally narrow and spectacular, cave-like canyon, with much water. Jim and Margaret were determined to see this canyon so they stood on my shoulders as I waded through the pools. At one point, a three-man

shoulder stand was used to get up a waterfall. This canyon, with its gracefully sculptured and patterned walls, is thought by most who see it to be one of the 2 or 3 finest in the Glen. In September when we visited it, the light made such beautiful patterns that many of the group gasped as they rounded one corner. It is with much regret that we realize that in a few weeks this canyon and, to the best of our knowledge, all of those similar to it, will be under hundreds of feet of water, as will all of the beautiful stream alcoves, some cut many hundreds of feet into the overhanging wall above, that were found. But most of all I will miss the opportunity to put a boat into river and drift peacefully down past some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. The waters of Lake Powell are now starting to back up behind the Glen Canyon Dam.

THE END

Semi-Annual Statement on the State of the Hiking Club

by the Semi-Annual President

The semester has gotten off to a good start with two trips that went, despite the weather. And a good share of the people on them were new or relatively new. This is good. It means that the Club is growing and acquiring (I hope) some enthusiastic "new blood." I hope that all members, new, old and prospective will continue to support the trips, either by leading or by going on them. (And you don't have to be an old member to lead a trip, either)

There are still several vacancies on committees, so everybody come in and sign up. It is a good way for new members to find out how the club runs and to get better acquainted with the old members. It is a good way for old members to make sure the things they want done get done and to get better acquainted with the new members.

I highly approve of Room C-sitting, so long as it is not the only activity one participates in. Everyone should bring his lunch in at noon once in a while and eat with us, help plan some unscheduled trips, argue over anything and everything.

I hope to see a lot of people around a lot of activities this semester.

Keturah Cashwiler

The Grand Canyon

A Quasidy in Three Faults

by Sam Greene

Characters: Tom Aley, the maximum leader
Sam Greene)
Roger Ulrich) Sherpas
Bill Rittenberg)

Fault I: Prologue

Tom Aley: Let us go to the Grand Canyon at Christmas
Where the warm breezes play on the vines
Where the cactus grow spikes that are tender
And the Tonto is level and fine.

There where the rocks are softer
Than the cheek of a newly born child
And the sunshine plays forever
Through days that are calm and mild:

We will stay high on the Tonto
On paths that are short and true.
There we'll see eagles fly onto
Craggs seen by incredibly few.

It's the scenic route we'll take, men!
Under the Muav's wall
Up there the eyes can take in
The length of a falling star's fall.

We'll travel the level Kaibab
Where the warm sun sings in the pines
Where it never snows in December
And the paths run in long straight lines.

Fault II: Denouement

Sam)
Roger) In a tone of righteous accusation with overtones of warning
Bill)

We froze our bones on the Kaibab
We froze them on the Supai
On the Tonto we froze our fingers and toes
Under the ice-blue sky.

We hunted the canyon over
For a place that was windless and warm
But the wind was a frigid rover
And the skies were rigid with storms.

Stay low, stay low on the Tonto!
Above there's trouble and distress
Up high you'll smash your legs pronto
Up high you'll soon be in a mess.

Stay low where the Tonto is level
A broad superhighway to roam
Tom Aley's a grinning devil
Who'll lead you away from home.

Stay low where the river runs freely;
Up high the Redwall goes sheer.
The Muav undulates unduly
And rocks fall unpleasantly near.

Up high near the cliffs there is trouble
The limestone boulders rebound
And strike after somersaults double
With a hungry and crunching sound.

Stay low where the cactus grows thickly
To be kicked aside by your shoe.
And the cat's paw and yucca are prickly
As is discerned by an inquiring few.

On the Kaibab the hills rise rocky
The trees are flooded with snow
With a fifty pound pack you'll break your back
If you stumble or stub your toe.

On the Kaibab it snows forever
A ten-foot snow covers bones
In those wontry winds there hovers
A tale of the dead and gone.

On the Kaibab it went below zero
In the Vishnu it froze at night
It snowed on the floor of the Canyon
And lizards froze in flight.

On a bend of the trail in the Supai
We were trapped all night in the rain.
As rocks worked loose from the ledges above
And fell with a most delicate aim.

We were camped on the bottom of Trinity
When a black cloud came from the North
We wondered from which of the Divinities
Such a Hell might issue forth.

It snowed all day in the Vishnu
In long wind-driven lines
While a red light flickered on the Redwall
Like Hell was flipping its blinds.

Fault III: The River

Sam: (with a Cassandra-like quality)

Where the Vishnu schist runs darkly
The canyon plunges sheer
The river's thick with rapids
And the bones of brave men and fair.

Men have gone mad on this river
Their souls damned by the wild waves' sound
But mad they are still gripped by its fever
And more have starved than drowned.

As you hear its roar above the Vishnu
You'll wish you'd been by then
When John Wesley Powell first ran it
With eight fearful and starving men.

"The river turned again into the granite.
At the head of a gorge, wild and dark
We watched the mad waves leaping
Waiting hungrily for our two small barks."

So, there's no out on the river, boys!
If you break your heart or your leg
There is no hearer for the dying voice
No god or devil to beg.

It's sweat on the Kaibab trail, men!
It's sweat in the Bright Angel Shale
It's break your guts lest you fail, men!
Should someone get back with the tale.

Chorus:

Oh, go to the Canyon with Aley
He'll lead you on paths that are true
From South Rim he leads hordes out gaily
And returns with Damnably few.
And returns, with a shuddering few.