

## Harvey Butchart's Hiking Log

### DETAILED HIKING LOGS (October 2, 1965 - June 10, 1966)

Crystal and Tuna Creeks from Point Sublime

[October 2, 1965 to October 3, 1965]

From the air it had looked easy to get down into Crystal right through the Redwall. My idea was to go down at the upper end where both arms of Dragon Creek had been possible, walk down to where I had been before and then go around into Tuna and either visit the site of the parachutists camp or if time was getting short go directly up to the Tuna Flint Saddle and then up to the rim west of Point Sublime.

I knew this would be a long trip so I left Flagstaff Friday afternoon and slept near Kanabownits Spring on the Point Sublime road. It was rather cold with a heavy frost forming on the outside of the sleeping bag. In the morning I drove to the fire road to the basin and left the car. I figured I would walk until I got a nice place in the sun before I ate my breakfast. This was a good enough idea but it did not make my water supply last as well as if I had eaten at the car and then filled the canteen after I had had all the water possible.

After walking along the road going northeast along the rim, I came to a place where I could see the rim from the road. The way down looked favorable so I skidded in the rockslides and broke through the brush to reach the Coconino. Here I had to try a second time before I found a good break. There were also a couple of ledges in the Supai that gave me pause. At one of them I let down my pack and canteen, tied to the end of a pole, and at the other I climbed down a tree that was close to the small cliff. The woods were beautiful and the walking was easy as I approached the edge of the Redwall. I was in the short arm that branches toward the west right near the longest arm as it ends in the Redwall. It is obviously impossible to get down the Redwall in either of these arms. There is a bigger arm also to the west a little to the south of where I first reached the Redwall rim. I should have investigated this before I started north to see what the main arm was like (it goes). Off to the south quite a lot farther there is a place that looks promising. A talus comes nearly to the top of the Redwall, and the top may be split giving access to the talus. I felt that I had taken long enough for this investigation, and if I were going to carry out the trip down to the parachutists camp, I would have to give up the project of getting into Crystal. I went back up the Supai near the end of Crystal in the Redwall and crossed over the top of a shale ridge to get into the drainage where I had come down. I was aided by a deer trail for the last part of this route and this was a real help in getting through the brush. When I got to the car about 12:30 p.m., I was pretty tired.

By 2:00 p.m. I had parked the car where the Point Sublime road is leaving the valley and is ready to start out to the final promontory. It took me about 30 minutes to get to the right place above the good break in the Coconino that Dirk and I had missed by so little. It is right around a point to the south of where we were trying to get down. I really hadn't seen the right place from the air, but it was back in the notch from where I was looking. Getting down the Kaibab at the rim was much harder than getting through the Coconino here. In fact, I found a good deer trail down the unusual open grassy slope that covers the Hermit Shale here. Neither was it hard to get down the Supai, but I had to leave the bed and go to the north for the lower drops. It was easy to get over to the saddle between Tuna and Flint. One branch of the

trail seemed to lead from the saddle northwest along the contour. While I was getting ready to take a picture of King Arthur Castle from here, I found a man built cairn. It seems unlikely that Lawes and MacRae would have put this here because it is not on the direct route down into Tuna (they went off Grama). Could W. W. Bass or some other prospector have put this here?

The way is simple down to the Redwall. There had been some brush on the way down to the saddle, but the way from here was much different, practically bare. Even the south facing slopes of Dragon and Crystal had been overgrown with all sorts of brush so that this route is wonderfully easy in contrast. The top 80 or 100 feet of Redwall is a simple walk down. There was first a short pitch that made me face in and use fingers as well as toes. About 170 feet down the Redwall, I came to a place that really had me guessing and studying. The dry fall on the west was impossible and investigation of a fall east of a spur showed that it is no better. However, I found that the spur had a nice crack in it and I could climb down here and get into the main canyon again. While looking for the way off the base of the spur, I found something I had begun to worry about, a pool of rain water. This pothole is over a foot deep and in any but the very driest season ought to be reliable (day in May, 1977). I had an early supper by this water and then walked on until 6:30 p.m. to a place that had some water and also the best smooth sand I had seen. My lightweight down bag supplemented by a blanket toward morning gave me complete comfort.

I ate bread and dates before the stars were out and was ready to move by six Sunday morning. With only my camera, canteen, and some gingersnaps for a snack, I could make good time. About where I had to leave the creekbed or get shut in by the Tapeats cliffs, I came to a small seep. There weren't any water loving plants around and I am not sure that it could be trusted long after the last rain (good May and October, 1977). I am pretty sure I saw more water in the bed of Tuna below the Tapeats. Quite a bit of burro signs were visible along the Tonto Plateau and I enjoyed a well established burro trail, so much more easily followed than a deer trail, for quite a bit of the way past the knoll that is just north of the parachutists' camp. An indication that the area of fine burro trails may be past was the desiccated body of a dead burro rather close to the campsite. I am not so sure that the park people are right in thinking that the burros have limited the bighorns. In this area I also saw many bighorn droppings as well as plenty of deer signs. I actually saw two deer at this lower elevation.

The rim above the river was also interesting. I could see the rock splitting the clear current where I had my mishap on the air mattress last year. With the present higher stage, there would be no trouble. The walk up from the river was obvious, a little east of the middle of the narrow plateau between Tuna and the next drainage to the west. In looking at my pictures recently, I found that I had taken a shot of this break from the south side of the river. I also got the best look yet at the breaks in the Tapeats on the south side of the river, and I found that my impression that you can get up out of the inner gorge just to the west of the mouth of Slate was correct. There is also an easier place yet a little farther to the west. Now I would like to check the impression I got from the air that you can get to the bottom of Slate from the east side without going clear around to get down.

Very little was left to mark the old campsite. Perhaps the ranger in the helicopter who shot the burro stopped at camp (Jim Bailey was shooting burros by rifle from the chopper). I strongly suspect that I am the only one who has followed the MacRae Lawes Route (MacRae and Lawes didn't see this) here from

the rim since 1944. I don't know how old Lawes was, but MacRae was 42 when he did this scramble. I was feeling my age or perhaps a lack of calories before I got to the car at 4:00 p.m.

Echo Peaks, left bank upstream, Jacob's Pools to the Paria Platform  
[November 6, 1965 to November 7, 1965]

Reider Peterson, Norvel Johnson, and I left Flagstaff about 7:15 a.m. and by 9:40 we were parked a mile north of the highway on the old road leading to Lee's Ferry on the east side of the Colorado River. We had no trouble finding the right valley leading to the beginning of the trail up to the south of the Echo Peaks spine. There was an inscription with a 1934 date on a rock shortly before the Jeep road gives way to the regular trail.

After the trail starts going north and up, it splits but higher the branches come together. The higher part, leading over the ridge south of the spine, is particularly wide and well built. When the trail started down to the east, we thought that we should start climbing the spire right near the trail in the belief that it was the south part of Echo Peaks. After some experiments, we gave up the southernmost spire and continued along the base to the west. Finally I thought there was a good chance to go up to a saddle between two spires. It worked quite well and we found that from the saddle we could go to the top of a spire to the south, a few yards to the second highest point along this row of something like thirteen spires. The highest rock was just to the north, but it seemed too tough. We were a lot higher than if we had succeeded where we had first tried going up at the south end. We built the first cairn on this summit. We could see that we were still quite a bit south of the South Echo Peak. I called for a descent to the west. After lunch we continued on down to a ravine that bounds a big sand slide.

Keeping to the large rocks that were exposed in the ravine next to the cliff, we went up several hundred feet until we had passed the slide. From here we worked through the jumble of broken rock to the top of the ridge immediately north of the South Peak. In going south toward the peak, we had to descend a few yards. Two ledge possibilities presented themselves. If we could work our way along precarious ledges south along the east side of the peak, we thought that we would eventually find a feasible route to the top. A narrow fissure pointing right toward us also beckoned. We were unanimous in selecting it. It was a bit steep, but there were no real problems and we had only a short scramble from its upper end to the summit. We built the first cairn, a small one because there were few loose rocks. It is quite a few feet higher than the North Peak. There is probably no good approach by any route other than the one we used. A companion peak just north of where we had arrived on the ridge looks high from the other side of the river on the way to the ferry, but it seems rather unimpressive from either the main South Peak or the North Peak. It may be too steep for our type of climbing, but we didn't give it serious consideration when we were near. My impression was that we could have done it but didn't see the point of it.

We had no real argument about how to proceed. Johnson wanted to go down into the deep notch between the two main peaks and hope for the best on the steep and bare pitches of the North Peak. I remembered our predicament on the similar looking slope of the spire near the Sheep Trail and called for a more laborious approach. We went back down the sandslide to the west and then north at a low level until we were definitely north of the North Peak. Here we could go up to the ridge to look down to the east onto the Colorado River where it runs west for over a mile. A simple walk up this ridge put us right below the

last steep monolith of the summit. Now we had the choice of going up another ravine similar to the one we had used for the South Peak or of going down and south along the east side following the top of the sand. The latter looked sure, but it was now getting rather late in the day and we still hoped to follow the left bank of the river into the alcove past Outlaw (?) Cave (Hislop Cave). Again we were unanimous in trying the ravine. It went fine up to a chockstone where I had to try about all the acrobatics I could think of. To make the last foot and a half past the chockstone, I braced my feet against an inward leaning wall and had only my shoulders against the opposite side which sloped more favorably away from the vertical. I have never been so stretched out in a horizontal position for a chimney climb before, but inch by inch I made it up and over the block. Reider saw how I had done it, but this time his leg was bothering him, and Norvel said that he had run out of umph. Neither of them made it over this obstacle I had worried about what the upper end of the crack would lead to, but once above it, the going was simple. Nothing worse than sloping slabs with fair pits and crevices were between me and the summit, quite a few more vertical yards above.

Strangely, there are two summit cairns on the North Peak. The very top one is of generous proportions, three feet in diameter and two feet or so deep. It still supports a stick. In an obvious place I found a glass jar with a neat note saying that it had been climbed that same day in 1957 with one buddy, a dog and Harry Aleson, the day before Harry would be 50. Then followed the names, Dean and Edna Tidball. It didn't seem perfectly clear that they were among this party or who wrote the note, but presumably both of them had come up that day. They added the note that they had stayed on top for over an hour and had started down about 3:30 p.m. I could see that the route from the south part of the sandslide on the east side of the peak would be easy enough for a dog, but we felt rather sure that it had not come up the ravine I used. I was soon down with my companions but I was sorry we had not brought a rope or some way of getting them over the chockstone. (The other cairn contained an old baking powder can with names from 1911.) It was 4:00 p.m. by the time we were down on the ridge above the route to the east side sandslide, and in only 35 more minutes we were down to the trail going up the left bank of the river. Here Reider decided that his leg was going to cause real trouble if he didn't turn back. We agreed that we would all follow the old road above the river and then go from the ferry back to the car along the road that shows on the quad map. It was obvious to Norvel and me that we would be doing a lot of moonlight hiking, but we hurried on to inspect the alcove beyond Hislop Cave.

When we came to the end of the road, we chose the beach and then found that there was no chance of getting through the thickets until we came to the clearing north of the alcove. We had no trouble going into it until near the end. Here the bed steepened and there were huge blocks of sandstone barring progress. I hustled up a talus to the east while Norvel decided to wait for me. Over the spur I went down into the bed again only to find that there was a ten foot dry fall ahead. Again, I went up the slope to the east, but now I couldn't get down into the bed. I was looking at the end only a stone's throw ahead. Now there was no time to go back down to the bed and try harder on the ten foot fall. After setting up my tripod and trying to record on film the overhang ahead at the top of a precariously steep climb, I rejoined Norvel. He had been waiting about 30 minutes for me to carry out this solo maneuver. We just had time to inspect Outlaw Cave and get to the end of the old road before darkness closed down. For an hour the moon was behind clouds but our uncertainty about the route was often removed by seeing Reider's footprints. By the last light of day, Reider found traces of the old road leading away from the upper ferry site along the red talus. Norvel and I missed this but we followed the ramp of the bluff sandstone that starts right

behind the gauging station tower. We had enough light to avoid the various ravines in the surface of this sloping formation and we finally came to traces of the old road. Near the place where this ramp breaks off, Reider was waiting for us. It was a good thing that we had not found the trail from the gauging station through the shale immediately above the river or we would have missed Reider. United again, we found a rough way down to the place that sloped continuously up to where the car was parked. We were able to see the car by the rather bright moon. I had snacked on extra food that Reider and Norvel had taken along, but now I had a belated meal at 9:30 p.m. and got a good night's sleep in my down bag.

On Sunday we drove around to Lee's Ferry and soon located the sunken steamboat. The boiler showed out of water and we could stand on it and look through the clear water at the old planking of the hull. Only about 30 feet through the willows of the bank there is an outcropping of bedrock and on its vertical face I easily spotted the G. M. Wright inscription. (1892 removed now, 1977.)

After taking the drive along the river south of the Paria mouth to see the lower ferry crossing and the old dugway shelf up the opposite cliff, we headed for Jacob's Pool and the trail that Donald Davis had taken to the top of the Paria Plateau. Seeps were running in several places that were dry when I was there before. Reider had to sit this one out because his leg bothered him after the little walking we had done at Lee's Ferry. When we had gotten over the broken foothills behind the springs, Norvel decided that he didn't feel up to the more than thousand foot climb ahead. When he was almost out of sight on the return trail to the car, I shouted a farewell. Within a minute he changed his mind again and headed back uphill. He overtook me while I was eating lunch at the top of the sandslide area.

Above this, the trail seemed to go too far to the south rather than up towards the ravine we were sure was the right way to reach the plateau. We took off up the broken slope and were probably better off than if we had stayed on the trail. After it swings to the south, it goes up more loose sand and heads back into the ravine higher up. In the ravine near the top, there is a lot of trail construction. On the desert varnished walls beginning about 150 yards from the top are the thickest set of Indian petroglyphs I have ever run into, not counting sites that were well known as tourist attractions. The remarkable thing is the great variety of designs. Some are neat and fresh looking cuts in the dark patina and others are covered over by obscuring patina themselves. There are pictures that I have seen at Supai, Canyon de Chelly, and elsewhere, but there are also some designs that I have only seen in pictures taken by others in Glen Canyon.

The G. M. Wright inscription that Davis had found eluded me until I was about ready to give up the search. While Norvel and I were out on a ledge above the trail to the north, he happened to look down on the south wall. There about 10 feet above the trail was the name we were looking for with the date 1894, two years after the date at Lee's Ferry. He also found Davis' observations of the name Ammon Davis and Spencer and the brand marks. These are on walls on both sides of the trail about 100 yards down from where you leave the plateau. This distance is to be measured along the trail, not a difference in elevation.

We descended keeping to the trail and enjoyed the skidding through the sandy slopes. Norvel's sharp eyes helped again. When we were at the base of the lower sandslide, he found some bits of pottery. We took two hours to go from the car to the top of the plateau including a half hour for lunch. We used 70 minutes for the return.

## Upper Havasu Canyon

[November 24, 1965 to November 28, 1965]

Both Allyn Cureton and I were afraid that the primitive road out to the Great Thumb Mesa would be impassible after the record rain. We figured that it would be better to tackle the area south of the Topocoba Trail with the gravel road approach to Hualapai Hilltop. The official prediction was for the clouds to stay through the weekend, and I drove to Williams with the windshield wipers going. However, there was only a little more precipitation and Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were clear.

We got started from the car at 11:30 a.m. and reached the creek by 1:20 p.m. with a half hour out for lunch. For once, we saw an Indian working on trail improvement in Hualapai Canyon. It took us one hour and 25 minutes to reach the junction of Havasu and Lee Canyons. We inspected the pictographs and the petroglyphs and very soon found the canyon broadening out to the south. the high vertical walls below this junction soon give way to a wonderland of red rocks in receding terraces. We could identify Mr. Burro and many other landmarks along the rims. It reminded me of views I have seen of the new Canyonlands National Park with the high, gray rim cliffs thrown in for good measure. Arizona Highways might consider the possibility of a fine article on this whole basin. the bottom lands and the gentler slopes of the side canyons support quite a few Supai horses, and the resulting trails are fine for walking. It is easy to keep up a three mile per hour average if speed is a consideration.

Water would be a problem in dry weather, but we could find rainpools in all the small ravines. There were short stretches where it would be difficult to climb out of the way of a flash flood, but most of the time there were remnants of clay terraces above the general level of the bottom. Good overhanging ledges are numerous enough to protect you from rain at night, but finding one near a pool of water was a little harder.

Wednesday night we camped under a rather skimpy overhang a little to the north of the mouth of Driftwood Canyon. Our down bags were more than adequate during this overcast night. We got under way by eight Thursday morning. Almost at once we were fooled into thinking that Driftwood was the main canyon. What we were to learn later is that all of the side canyons seem to carry more water in a storm than the main canyon whose bottom is usually silted in with clay and overgrown with willows. Allyn realized before I did that we were going up a tributary, but we continued to see how it would end. When we were getting near the top of the Supai Formation, we found a fine overhang on the east side above a pool of water and here we left our packs except that we carried both lunches in mine.

There were six or more horses in the upper basin of Driftwood. We passed them and went to the south end where we could see that most of the Coconino was covered by a talus slope. I thought that a trail might lead from the upper end through the rest of the Coconino, but we discovered that this was false. Still, we could scramble up the rest of the Coconino in a gully and walk up a steep clay slope to the base of the top Kaibab Limestone cliff. Up here there was a fine deer trail which we followed to the west. We had no trouble finding a way into the upper ravine and out to the rim only about a mile from the Hilltop road. I would estimate from the map that this is eight or nine miles south of the road end. This would be a fine route to use to get into the south end of the basin instead of going clear down the Hualapai Trail and

back south. We had lunch near the top where we found some water in the ravine. It was strange that we found no indication of a clear deer trail out this way. We saw two fine deer during our stay in the area and I thought I saw droppings of bighorn and even some tracks. It is significant that the bighorn do not shun the area that is used by horses.

There was a lot of day left when we reached our packs so we proceeded back to the main canyon and on upstream. At the rather early hour of four, we were caught by a rain shower and found shelter under a large overhang whose only drawback was that the sand below could be swept by a superflood. We could see that it had stayed dry during the recent wet spell, so we figured that there was little danger. This spot is on the right wall of the main canyon a little less than a mile downstream from the mouth of Havatagvich Canyon. There are two side ravines in the angle on the same right bank just upstream from the place, and we were able to fill our canteens from a pool in the nearest. There was plenty of room to spread out under protection from all but the most driving rain. We camped there two nights.

We were away by 7:40 on Friday morning with complete confidence in our ability to keep our location on the map of the Supai Quad. Within a few minutes, where the bed begins an easterly stretch towards Havatagvich, we saw names written on the right wall. Two Wills brothers hailing from Grand Canyon Village had dated their trip in charcoal during May, 1965, and Bennett and Dan Hanna, two Supai men, had signed the register in chalk as of January 1965. I met Bennett Hanna's uncle on Sunday and learned that he works on a ranch southwest of Seligman.

As usual, we noted that Havatagvich Canyon brings in a lot of gravel and cuts a deeper bed than the main canyon. We got out the map to assure ourselves that we were really following the main valley to reach Moqui Trail Canyon, the objective of the trip. There were some big meanders and also some straighter stretches where we could cover the map at a good clip. I noticed a lot of tamarisks along here although there had been none for long reaches lower down. Usually they crowd the willows out up to a certain distance from the Colorado then abruptly stop. It was ten when we turned into Moqui Trail Canyon on a well marked horse trail. Towards the upper Supai, the bed was pitted with rain pockets. Especially along the south rim the Kaibab is broken into towers some of which tilt out at a precarious angle. We couldn't tell from the map where the trail goes out. At first I thought that it must turn out of sight to the south, but there the wall is sheer in the Coconino. There is an awe inspiring defile through the Coconino at the north side of the upper end, and the trail finally headed toward it. A few hundred yards before it starts up the chaos of boulders in this ravine, the trail passes a seep spring. It appears to be permanent since there are plenty of ferns around it. The map showed Bachathaive Spring off to the south below another section of cliff. there are pieces where this trail would be hard for a horse, especially carrying a pack, but above the Coconino the trail shows a lot of good construction and is in fine shape clear to the rim. As shown on the map, it goes across the plateau in the direction of Moqui Tank. I suppose if I had driven out here from the village, I would have tried going down the arm of the upper canyon from Moqui Tank and would have wasted much time in finding the trailhead.

Allyn and I had fine views of various mountains from the top, Trumbull, Rama, the San Francisco Peaks blanketed by new snow. We used two hours in going from the junction of Moqui and the main canyon to the rim. We were back to our campsite by four thirty and relaxed before dinner. From a leisurely start the next morning, we reached the beginning of Havasu Creek about lunch time. We had stopped about 30

minutes walk up canyon to workout climbing the large triangular rock that has fallen into the middle of the wash.

We reached the mouth of Horse Trail Canyon shortly after one and decided after some hesitation on my part to go up and try to locate the route out near Wescogame Point. Earl Paya had told Allyn about it. When we got into the bay north of the point, we could see the talus covering the Coconino on the north side. Although Allyn questioned this route, I wanted to see whether a ledge led off the northeast. We used up the allotted time and learned that there is no access to this talus from above. We could see that there is a much more probable route up a ravine on the south side, and when we were in the village, Earl Paya confirmed our idea that this must be the route.

At the campground we met Jorgen Visbak looking around to see whether I had come in yet, and we had a fine visit with him and John Harrington. They had some young and inexperienced hikers with them from Las Vegas, and although they had spent three days on the project, they had been unable to reach the river.

On this trip, I carried more food than necessary. In fact, I was lugging a third of all the food as I went up the trail to the car on Sunday. It took me just under four hours to go from the campground to the car. It was a good trip and I want to see more of the upper part of Havasu Canyon, especially Havatagvich Canyon where Earl says there is another trail to the rim.

Left bank of the Colorado River above Lee's Ferry  
[December 11, 1965]

I was still miffed at my inability in finding names out in the rock that Phil Martin had located after he had heard about them from Pat. Pat had said that the most interesting one was at the end of the short canyon just east of Hislop Cave. After a hairy climb up to the bare wall below an overhang here, I was ready to try something else. I thought that perhaps the right canyon was the one that ends at Glen Azimuth 3187 or possibly the one just east of Echo Peaks. I considered using the recently acquired boat and motor, but since Roma didn't want to come out on the day that was supposed to continue our wet weather, I decided to see how well I could get around by kayak. I would save some time in launching and landing and I figured I would keep warmer while pulling the oars.

The light weight oar powered kayak proved surprisingly effective. By staying near the bank and rowing at a three and a half or four mph clip, I could go upstream quite a bit faster than I could walk the old road along the left bank. In most places the water was crystal clean and I could see the bottom 12 feet or more deep. Sometimes I could see great blocks of sandstone completely submerged which at the low stage of water might be hazardous to a motorboat. Once or twice big fish jumped with a splash that startled me. I saw a couple of 15 inches swimming calmly through the clear water. In a grove of willows, there was a slide down to the beach that made me think of a beaver run. Numerous cut willow saplings on the sand backed up my surmise. The towering cliffs of the right bank and the peaks above the sandslide on the opposite side with the more distant Vermilion Cliffs to the west make this the sort of boating that would be hard to beat. All this wildness and quiet water too! From the middle of the river, I noticed something up on the sandslide that had escaped me before. There is a bare groove or track cut through the vegetation near the north side of the slope. I don't think it is the trail which I thought should switchback up and leave



the slope over near the south end. It looked quite fresh and I wondered whether some huge boulder had come down during the recent rain.

Upstream from the mouth of the canyon which is east of Echo Peaks the river is rather shallow and with a stronger current. I got past the mouth with effort but when I was well past Hislop Cave and the short canyon, I decided it would be faster to walk the left bank. There were definite signs of a trail or old road above the water level. Almost all of this was obliterated by the slides of clay and rocks, but in a few places the old retaining wall was still there. I suppose this used to connect with the road that seems to end at the canyon mouth west of Hislop Cave.

There were no names that I could see on the canyon walls. Contrary to what is shown on the Lee's Ferry Quad map, there is no permanent water in this side canyon and there had been plenty of recent rain. Pools were still standing in the hollows of the bedrock. From out on the river, one might think that you wouldn't be able to walk any distance up this slot without coming to some insurmountable cliff. There are many meanders, but the level sand goes a considerable distance in between the sheer cliffs. It is one of the most impressive, not excepting those north of Navaho Mountain. Evidently some of the boaters have other interests besides fishing, because I was following a man's tracks almost all the way to the end. Once I thought there might be a shallow cave 40 feet above the stream level that conceivably could hold an Indian ruin. It was easy to scramble up, but there had never been a structure there. About two thirds of the way to the end, there is a plunge pool. The way I got past was to take a short run and get up a steep pitch on the west. The footprints were missing above this obstruction. At the very end there was a possible route to a ledge below the final wall. I got about halfway up the difficult part and then let discretion rule. It took about 25 minutes to walk back to the river.

On the return I checked the short canyon just east of Hislop Cave for the third inspection. I watched as I passed all bare walls. For the first time I persisted in climbing the bed when I came to the jumble of big rocks near the end. I found that I didn't have to climb the talus to the east, but when I came to the slot in the bedrock, I would have had to climb up to the east and go down the way we had done on the previous trip with the Petersons. This satisfied me that there were no easily reached inscriptions here.

Since I was so near Hislop Cave, I thought I might as well give it another inspection. I don't see why we had been so unobservant before. There were several names on the wall. One was the one Pat had been telling me to notice. Perhaps the most interesting was not dated. It was shallowly carved in cursive writing, and although I didn't take notice on the spot, I believe it read A. Colon. It looked quite old and I even considered whether it might be done by a Spaniard who came through before Anglos were so numerous.

The afternoon was passing, but I figured I could row down the middle of the river in the dark if necessary, so I walked up the longer canyon just west of the cave. Again there were footprints ahead of me, made by two men, I believe. This canyon is not as narrow as the first I had inspected, but it is still impressive. I could find no names on the walls. Again when one is a little more than halfway to the end, there is an obstruction which can be bypassed easily on the east. At the very end, there is the usual ledge in front of the final wall. This time I was able to go up and slap the wall although there was some friction climbing. It took me 45 minutes to get up to the end while I was watching for inscriptions and just over a half hour

to get back to the kayak. I had no trouble rowing back to the boat ramp in 35 minutes where I would have taken more than an hour to walk it. It had been a beautiful and satisfying trip.

South fork of Diamond Creek

[December 20, 1965 to December 22, 1965]

Dock Marston had interested me in seeing more of upper Diamond Creek and particularly in getting down from above from the Frazer Wells road. I was foiled in my attempt to go down and meet him while on the Sportyak trip by the breakdown of my Jeep. It was just as well since I never would have reached lower diamond on schedule.

This time the dubious aspect was the weather. We had had a fair amount of snow the preceding week and the long range forecast was for more. When the weatherman changed his tune to references of some cloudiness in the afternoon, I thought I might as well go. I would be careful not to get the car very far from the all weather road. On Monday morning about ten, I parked about nine miles from Highway 66 beside the trash can just south of the dip which is the valley of Robber's Roost Canyon. I went down the nearest draw and in a short time found myself at a cattle tank which is reached by a turnoff from the gravel at the bottom of the valley. A cowpath leads west on one side or the other of the streambed. This is a well forested gorge between hills. In about one and a half miles you come to a broad valley between the hills to the south and the best landmark in the region, a butte that goes up into the Coconino Sandstone. A rockslide of darker fragments high on the middle of the south side is a distinguishing characteristic of this butte. After walking the streambed, I found that a dry weather road has been bladed all the way along here. On the return I found that it is marked, at the main gravel road, Wilder's Spring, Catchment #10. One branch goes north at the east end of the big butte and the continuation turns north at the west end. It is straighter than the streambed and I preferred walking it even though the mud and snow made for poor footing.

When the road veered away, I followed the bed. After a pleasant lunch in the sun, I soon found the Redwall Limestone. The stream cut down into it about 100 feet before it came to the big drop. I backtracked and went along the rim to the north where the snow had melted. The north facing south rim was steep and all white. I soon realized that the Redwall is just about as sheer and continuous here as it is in the park section of the canyon. I went far enough to see, however, that the west wall of the south arm of Robber's Roost Canyon was more broken. I could see both from the only map I have of the area, the Williams 1:250,000 Quad, and by my eye that the walk around would be a long drag. It was now after 2:00 p.m. and I figured I would never get down before dark so I returned to the car keeping high to the north of the streambed back to the dirt road. This time I followed the road clear to the gravel. It avoids the narrows, just west of the cattle tank by going north up a small valley and doubles back to the gravel road. I figure that this was twice as long as going back on the cowpath. I treated myself to a motel room Monday night and returned to the project Tuesday morning.

What I learned on Tuesday after a tedious approach to the descent through the Redwall I had spotted on Monday was that there is a very good route down only a half mile farther than I had gone. I could have gone down in a little over an hour from the point I reached. While I was following the rim north of the Robber's Roost streambed, I saw several caves that would bear investigation. One or two were hard to

reach, but at least one could be entered with little risk. They were in the upper part of the Redwall. I was hoping to find a dry place under an overhang since there was plenty of Supai Sandstone around but all I could see was very wet mud. Similarly, when I was down below, I looked for overhangs in the Tapeats Sandstone, but the Tapeats itself was rather obscure. I believe it is not very thick and is mostly covered by talus material.

On Tuesday I drove about six miles away from route 66 and parked about 100 yards up a side road that is marked only by a crude post and no sign. It was on a rise and I knew that more moisture would not make it impassible. Since it wasn't on my map, I could only hope that it would lead to the south fork of Robber's Roost Canyon. Not far to the side of the road, there is an insulated cable that connects small metal boxes mounted on steel fence posts. I assumed that it is part of a field telephone system. After walking for an hour, I came to the road end near a cattle tank, but what is more unusual is a recently constructed leanto with a big tank for bottled gas beside it. The oil on the dirt floor and the copper piping from the tank indicate that at one time there was some sort of power plant under the shed, but I couldn't guess why the stuff was placed here.

This cattle tank is distinctive for the breach in the dam. The dam is over 20 feet high, but the little Dutch boy wasn't there and a flood has cut a V, 15 feet deep. I followed the bed downstream until I came to a resistant stratum of Supai that causes a fall of 25 feet sheer and a further drop of 50 or 60 feet. My route led to the west here so that I would be on the right side for a descent of the Redwall. From the high ground, I finally saw that this was not the south fork of Robber's Roost but only another hanging valley that ends above the Redwall close to the canyon I had been in on Tuesday. Furthermore, the canyon from the breached tank has an imposing tributary which I now had to cross. Further along I found that the hanging valley above the south fork of Robber's Roost, or perhaps we should call it the southwest arm of Diamond Creek, is really double. The east one is not quite as deep and steep as the west, but they go over the Redwall into the big bay at separate points. The only shelter I found on this trip was a shallow cave near the top of the Redwall on the west side of the eastern one of these parallel ravines. The roof is fire blackened and there was a little charcoal on the floor. Needless to say, going down and up these ravines several hundred feet deep became rather tiresome. I resolved to go farther to the south and try to stay on the high ground more on the return. When I finally got around to the west of the main bay, I started up over a high point in the Redwall to a site I had chosen from across the bay. I actually passed a narrow slot and then decided that it would bear investigation. It turned out to have indications of a deer trail and I found that it was distinctly easier than the place I had picked on Monday and also easier than the place that looked good from across the bay at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday. The footing is a bit bad at times on loose material, but the deer go out on the clay slopes when they can. I can't see a horse getting down here. It lines up quite well with the place I mentioned as being where I could have descended on Monday. I believe that place on the north side of the junction of the bed of Robber's Roost with this southwest arm would be easy enough for a horse. As Davis noted, this valley is a favorite with horses. Judging by tracks, deer are also plentiful, and if I am not mistaken, I also saw signs of bighorn.

Fifteen minutes walk from where I reached the streambed, I came to a grove of cottonwoods and other trees. I have seen such groves where there is no water on the surface, but I figured I might as well take a look. It is to the east of the main streambed and is on its own terrace. There was a nice little stream that made a surface stream through the clay. As soon as it reached the sand and gravel of the main streambed,

it disappeared. There was one pool deep enough to immerse a canteen. This made my base, a grove with plenty of dead wood, a spring, and shady level ground. The surrounding crags are as imposing as anything in the Grand Canyon, but I found no evidence that it has been used by men. I dropped my pack and gave myself two hours to see as much of the lower bed as possible.

In something like ten minutes, I came to the junction with Robber's Roost Wash. Very close below this is another smaller spot with vegetation indicating a spring. It is on the east side of the main bed and causes a surface flow which is hardly more than a trickle for a hundred yards. About ten minutes farther on, I came to the real spring which is the source of the flow in the south arm of Diamond. It comes out of the Archean as does the trickle above. The spring where I left my pack is in greenish shale. I had to stretch my deadline by five minutes to reach the junction with Diamond. More water was coming down this main bed although the arm looked more constricted. I noted that it took 25 minutes to walk from the junction to the beginning of the water in the south arm. My camp was about 70 minutes of upstream walking from the junction. By noon on Tuesday, the sky had looked threatening, but since I could see more blue near the horizon I thought it would blow over. Soon after I retired, two light showers occurred while I could still see stars in other parts of the sky, but later I woke to a steady rain with no stars anywhere. I pulled the plastic sheet from under my bag and put it over me and the pack, but the sound of the rain so close to my ear stopped most of my sleep for the rest of the night. It stopped before morning and the fragments of fog in front of the cliffs and mostly preventing the view to the tops made an amazing sight. I got started as soon as it was light enough to pack and go, but the fog cut off my view of the slot in the cliff which I had come down. Sixty seconds spent building a cairn the day before would have saved 20 minutes of fumbling for the right route. I went too far and checked two ravines before I found the right place. I was out of the slot on top about 80 minutes after breaking camp. I got down into the first canyon at the same place I had used on Tuesday although it seemed farther. The sky was sending down a slight drizzle that I figured was better than snow. Every time I brushed against a bush, I would get wetter, so when I got on better footing, I carried my plastic sheet around me like a poncho. Unfortunately, I had no compass, but I thought I knew the area well enough to avoid the hardest walking of the previous day. I figured I could ascend south tending ravines and take a turn to the east or left after a suitable time in each. The trouble with this plan was that there were more ravines farther to the south and I missed the count. Formerly the fog had cut off seeing distant landmarks, but now it began snowing and visibility went down again. I must have crossed the draw leading to the breached dam rather close to the road end. Finally I came out on the featureless prairie above the ravines. By this time I was thoroughly confused. I was too wet and cold to really stop and eat a good meal, but I tried some gingersnaps twice. I followed a higher ridge of sandstone to its end, and then for about five minutes the snow stopped and the fog lifted enough for me to see most of the lower part of the butte north of the broad part of Robber's Roost Valley. Going down to that valley and finding the road I had used on Monday was a sure way to get to the car even though it would be over twice as long. By now I was in no mood to use the easiest or best way back. Walking through five inches of snow on top of soft mud was pretty exhausting and I recall plenty of stories of hunters who had fallen in their tracks. My gloves had been wringing wet for hours and I doubt whether I could have built a fire without a knife to shave off the wet surface wood. I was glad to hit a draw leading down into the valley and find the road. When it left the broad valley, I followed the cowpath to the tank and soon reached the gravel road to Supai. After another hour of easy walking on the road I found the car. I have always been skeptical about providential occurrences, but if anyone asks whether I have had personal experience with them, I might mention the brief view to the landmark when I was in the right place to see it.

## Diamond Creek

[January 21, 1966 to January 25, 1966]

Allyn Cureton came with me and we parked on a side road to an unoccupied shack on the hill north of Robber's Roost Valley. At 10:30 a.m. we followed the road past the building and then found a trail down into the bottom land where we hit the cowpath west. I knew this path and the road it leads to through the open valley south of the high butte. I had previously noticed the dark rock slide high on the slope but for the first time I saw that it comes from a volcanic dike still standing at least 30 feet high above the Hermit Shale. The road was clear of snow and mostly frozen so that we walked at a good rate. By 12:30 p.m. we had come to the end of the fork that goes farthest west, and we had lunch in a draw where we got the sun but no wind.

We crossed this big basin south of the main branches of the complicated drainage pattern and got on the high flats a half mile north of the rim of Robber's Roost Canyon and the main arm of Diamond where you would come down into Diamond about a half mile downstream from the side canyon containing the lower of the two main springs. However, we hit the rim at the southeast edge of a large bay east of this pass. Rather than back up and go around to the pass, we started down into an impressively narrow ravine that leads around to the base of the slope up through the Redwall to the pass. There were places where we had to use hand and toe holds, but we made it down. It was a relief when we came to the first horse manure and knew for sure that there were no further difficulties. It took us from 2:00 until 3:30 p.m. to get down to the bed of Robber's Roost Canyon. If we had gone around to the pass, I feel sure that we would have seen our way clear to descend directly into Diamond and we would have had quite a bit more time to see what was new to me. As it was, we proceeded down to the junction of Robber's Roost and the main stream and then walked for 45 minutes down the increasingly impressive Archean gorge. There is quite a variety of rock, mostly very dark, but some is reddish granite. Both down in the Precambrian and up along the rim of Redwall Limestone, there seem to be an unusual number of spires. Just about anywhere you look, you will see balanced rocks precariously perched on their pedestals. We were glad to pick a campsite by 5:15 p.m. and use the ample light to pull together some wood for a campsite.

By 7:45 on Saturday morning, I was starting down the increasingly narrow gorge to visit the junction of Diamond and Peach Springs Wash. The mileage on the map, about two and a half, is deceptive because of the many right angle turns. I kept watching for Donald Davis' Black Aisle. For most of the way, there were still alcoves and sand and willows or catclaw. One could scramble up the rough rock for several yards after a sprint to the likeliest place if he heard the rumble of a flood. As an omen of what could happen in here we noticed a driftwood log spanning a side ravine a good 50 feet above the little stream. About two thirds of the way from the Robber's Roost mouth to Peach Springs Wash, we came to the real Black Aisle. Here for a quarter of a mile, there were few if any ways to get above a flood. We came to the small fall, about eight feet in drop, and saw how it could be bypassed by a man. A boy or girl might need a boost, and it is hard to see how a horse could get up the smooth rock with the inch wide ledges. A burro might do this with a good leap at the bottom. On the way back from Peach Springs Wash I recognized the picture of the pinnacle that was shown in the 1984 National Geographic. It was a short walk upstream from the fall. Allyn looked at the road and in Peach Springs Wash and thought that it was about the way he saw it last fall. A truck would be better than a car for this road.

We got back to the campsite about 11:00 a.m. and after snacking and packing, we moved on. Lunch was eaten before we came to Robber's Roost confluence. About 40 minutes walk up stream, the Tapeats cliff is pronounced on the south but there is no actual narrows such as you find in many side canyons of the National Park. Beyond this point, the valley broadens and instead of walking the streambed, it is better to watch for the horse trails on one side or the other. The first tributary is on the left as you face up (right bank in river terminology) and is dry. Near the Redwall rim on the right wall is a shapely natural bridge where a cave cut through to the surface. This is about halfway from the side canyon just referred to and the next coming in from the opposite side. There is another indentation in the west wall before you come to the side canyon to the south. This one to the south is interesting because it leads to the pass over into Robber's Roost Canyon and I am practically sure that it is the horse route from above into both canyons. You can walk down to this pass from the platform if you keep to the north slope of the promontory separating Robber's Roost Canyon from Diamond and then you can go into either from the pass. We could call this Horse Trail Canyon.

A small spring comes into Diamond just upstream from Horse Trail Canyon but about half the water comes in from the next canyon, also from the left side of Diamond. This is what Davis refers to as the lower spring. We had left our packs at the confluence of Robber's Roost and Diamond and we wanted to reach them well before dark. We kept on then passed another dry canyon coming from the right side of Diamond. It is a long one and might be called the main canyon, but the higher spring comes in from quite a long canyon itself. The forest in the upper spring canyon is particularly fine and there are very few places where thickets or deadfalls block ones progress. Just as we were turning into this canyon, Allyn pointed to some very fresh looking cans, mostly large size cling stone peaches. My conclusion is that some men were using a packhorse to get here and camp because I can't feature a backpacker toting such bothersome weights. A little farther on we came to a skeleton which appeared to be a deer although the identification was not sure since the head was gone. Allyn thought that it was large enough to be a cow.

The springs are about 20 minutes of fast walking up from the mouth of this canyon and come down a steep bank from 50 or 60 feet above the bed. The water comes down by several small falls in the thick bank of maidenhair fern. The actual site of the spring is such a mass of dead and living vegetation that one would have to play Tarzan to get through it. I penetrated the mass slightly but backed down to the bed below while Allyn forced his way to the clear area above and joined me above the springs in the dry bed. Allyn was also the one who saw some more old cans in the main valley below the spring canyon, and he spotted the window on the west wall of the lower spring canyon. It may not be a window through a thin wall as Davis suggested. It just might be a straight cave that penetrates quite a thickness. It was hard to identify trees with the leaves down, but as evidence that Davis was right, near the upper spring, I picked up a half a walnut shell.

We saw no signs of ancient Indian occupation, but we didn't search the flats. There is a cairn built on a projecting rock about 50 feet above the bed of Robber's Roost Canyon a few minutes walk upstream from the spring that makes the permanent flow, or about 30 minutes walk above the confluence of Robbers Roost and Diamond.

We camped at the confluence and went out on Sunday morning by the same route we had come down. When we got out to the plateau, we circled around to the north to get a look into Diamond. We had clear views into the lower spring canyon and could see the easy descent to the pass at the top of Horse Trail Canyon. We found another cairn at the narrow place on the high ground separating the valleys draining into Robber's Roost and Diamond Canyons. We reached the car by 3:30 p.m. to find that some one had taken a jug of water, a steep tape, and a pair of cheap gloves while we were gone. It was nice he hadn't stripped the car.

It is indeed a fascinating region and now I want to go back and enter upper Diamond by the Horse Trail and see all the branches. There may be other ways in, but I rather doubt it.

Salt Trail Canyon and travertine dome

[February 5, 1966]

For several years I had looked at the Kolb's pictures of the Little Colorado cascades which appeared in the National Geographic article and had thought that the bed must have changed considerably since there are now no falls of the size their picture shows. I thought it would be interesting to locate their position from the background and compare the present bed with the bed as they saw it.

After a 15 minute delay to pick up Jay Hunt and then finding that he had made no preparations to go after making me take him along just the day before, Norvel Johnson and I went on, leaving town at 5:30 a.m. I drove the dirt road from Cedar Ridge to the parking above Salt Trail Canyon with only one very minor wrong turn which I immediately corrected by backing 20 feet. We reached the parking in an even three hours after leaving Flagstaff, and this included a gas stop at the Gap. There are now two well built cairns indicating where you should park and also pointing to the trailhead. Since I don't recall having seen them before, I think that Dr. Ricker's Sierra party must have put them up. The small cairns along the trail also seemed more numerous than before. We could still see plenty of hiking boot prints in protected sandy places and even on the sand near the river. Two or three of the party had walked upriver a mile or so to see the Travertine dams.

It was my fourth round trip over the top part of the trail and Norvel's first. He was properly impressed by the entire locale even though the river was a light brown instead of blue. Quite a bit of water is coming past Cameron. There is almost no trail showing except where feet have knocked small rocks aside. I wonder about G. W. James' statement that the Hopi will have to do some trail work or they will no longer be able to get their burros down here. I suspect the only trail construction that was ever done here was scraping a path through the scree slope below the Redwall. There is no vestige of a retaining wall anywhere along it. Although Norvel and I were not feeling up to par after short sleep rations the night before, we went from the car to the river in two hours and 45 minutes.

A tarp from the prospector's camp at the foot of Salt Trail Canyon was all that we saw from the duffel we had found in October, 1964. Of course there were empty cans around, and we saw more of them along the way down. This route to grandeur is becoming better known.

I had brought an air mattress with me so that I could cross the river and look for the Kolb's picture site, but with Norvel along, I walked up the right bank with him. We had the usual trouble getting above the thickets. There is quite a series of springs just before you reach the end of Big Canyon. It is a good thing that one can walk the boulders and sandbars between the thickets and the river. We miscalculated and got into some deep soft mud right at the mouth of Big Canyon. Norvel was right behind me and saw me going in to my shoe tops. We both made some quick leaps for the bank, but he got into mud up to his knees while I headed for a different place and got no mud on my trousers.

We waited until we came to a sunny spot to eat our lunches. The canyon made a slight bend to the east. Soon after we started on we reached the place where you see fantastic designs in the old travertine. Great chunks are left along the banks with one or two pieces in the middle. We were wondering whether we would have time to reach the Kolb's picture when Norvel announced that we might already be there. I soon saw that he was right. I retreated a few yards to get into the sun before undressing and crossing the river on my mattress. It was cold but not unbearable. I climbed the talus until the background matched the old picture perfectly, but the nearby rockslide and the riverbed had changed completely. The Kolbs were still at least five miles below the Springs Trail instead of the one mile they thought at the time. This spot is about three fourths of a mile above the mouth of Big Canyon.

On the return, we had an interesting encounter with cattails that were just ready to scatter their silky seeds. A little of the perfectly packed fluff expands to a lot.

To the Little Colorado rim above Blue Springs  
[February 12, 1966]

Ever since I received Donald Davis' letter written November 24, 1965, I had been interested in getting to the site of the mysterious inscriptions on boulders below the south facing Kaibab rim several hundred feet north of the dropoff of the draw at the head of the Blue Springs Bay. It would be a one day project even without driving out on the road past Cedar Mountain. Norvel Johnson came with me while the rest of the hiking club went down the Hermit Trail.

The main reason for this date was that there seemed to be no other counter attractions or obligations, but the conditions for the hike were poor, namely a cold wind at Desert View and about ten inches of heavy but uncrusted snow. On the lower plateau around Cedar Mountain, the snow was about six inches deep and still lower below the next drop the snow was anywhere from zero to four or five inches deep. What helped until we got to the east side of Cedar Mountain was a pair of wide truck tracks. Keeping in the tracks was a little like walking a railroad rail, but it was surely better than going through the unpacked snow. It was cloudy at first and as a storm was predicted, we thought the weather man might be right for once. However, the sun came out strong about 11:30 a.m. and the sky remained clear. We had no real worries about keeping warm until after 5:00 p.m. My shoes were not well chosen for a snow hike and my feet were wet most of the time. I carried dry socks which I changed into when my feet began to get cold. There were no real ill effects. However, we were both quite tired toward the end, and Norvel had to slow down. He seemed more relieved when we reached the car at 7:10 p.m. than he ever has before.



The truck tracks led us around the north side of Cedar Mountain. Soon after they started south on the east side, we left the road where there is a washed out wagon track starting steeply down to the east. The south facing slope was free of snow, so we stayed above the ravine. After turning north a few yards at the rim of the big drop, we found a way to descend where there was little snow. Below the steep drop near the top, Norvel noted an overhang with some very fresh Indian pictures. They were done in very deep red clay on the light Kaibab Limestone. One or two might have been old classic designs of the cliff dwellers, but the rest of the marks seemed to be practice scribbles of a beginner. I suspect that these are doodles of some modern Navaho shepherd.

On the snow covered but relatively flat land below, we saw a Navaho moving a large flock of sheep to the north. One of the four dogs seemed a little too aggressive and came over toward us. I armed myself with a piece of dead sagebrush, and we gave the flock as wide a berth as possible. We were climbing the opposite side of Straight Canyon when the sheep were coming down into it from the south. We repeated this process for two or three more draws that slope down to the east and ate our lunch just before we reached the road that goes along the valley south of Gold Hill. We followed the road until we were near the narrows where it goes through to the flats southeast of Gold Hill. On the slope above the road, we saw a new way to collect water on the reservation. They grade an area about as big as a tennis court and line it with plastic sheeting. Water that runs down to the lower corner of the diamond goes through a pipe to a bowl lined with plastic, and below this is a pipe leading to a sheet metal drinking trough. Another of these catchments has been built on the east side of the valley near the ravine leading to the Blue Springs Bay.

There seems to be an example of stream piracy at this ravine. The valley to the west now drains to the south into a large ravine at a lower elevation. The west end of the Blue Springs ravine slopes to the west now and there is a large earthen dam to collect the water flowing west. However, only a short distance east in the ravine, the water still flows east into the Little Colorado River. A much smaller dam collects this water. The small dam had a pool behind it but the large one did not. There were also several shallow rainpools with ice on them in the bed. I had thought I could remember Davis' instructions about finding the inscriptions. We went to the very end of the streambed and then had to back up a few yards to the north. After passing a rather steep slope with no good rocks for pictures, we got up to a higher level where there is a rather broad bench below the top ledge of limestone. Here are some rather large detached rocks about shoulder high on a man. The surface has a good desert varnish and it seemed as if the inscriptions should be on them if they are anywhere. All that Norvel and I could make out were irregular markings where the surface had chipped off from natural causes. I took a picture to send to Donald, but I wish I had taken one of the entire area. Maybe he saw something we didn't, but we went on to the north until we came to the deep but round bottomed valley that leads up to the natural start of the Blue Springs Trail.

By now it was 2:00 p.m. and we were satisfied that we weren't going to find anything significant. We returned by a route that was slightly different from the approach, mainly in going south in the valley east of Gold Hill instead of crossing the ridge to the road south from the Hill. We noted that we took only four hours and ten minutes of actual walking time from the checking station to the rim above Blue Springs but we needed five hours to get back when we were tired and had to go uphill. ( I found the modern petroglyphs later.)

Clear Creek

[March 4, 1966 to March 6, 1966]

I left town as soon after classes as I could on Friday, but it was 9:00 p.m. by the time I was starting down the South Kaibab Trail. It was hard to hurry over the frozen trail at the top and although the moon was bright, I would have had better going in daylight. The night at the Bright Angel Campground was about as chilly as it had been in Diamond Creek weeks before. We were having a cold wave and at Flagstaff on the morning of the fourth, it was officially 18 degrees. Some campers at the bottom said that they had slept comfortably, so I slept out instead of getting a cabin.

By 6:15 a.m. on Saturday, I was packed up and walking. Breakfast was eaten after I reached sunshine at the rim of the inner gorge. I was feeling some very stiff muscles on my way over to Clear Creek. It took me four hours and 45 minutes of actual walking to go from Bright Angel Campground to the bed of Clear Creek. This was almost a half hour longer than I took last year when I walked down from the south rim and then on over. My nearly 59 years are showing. Clubb had told me that there are some striking narrows in the side canyon leading below Cape Royal. Since I had never been in this major branch, I was eager to see it. He had reported an interesting evidence of Indian occupation also. In the flat next to the main creek just above the mouth of this tributary I came on a deep mesal pit. There is still quite a pile of charcoal covering the bottom.

Not far from the mouth of this tributary you pass the side canyon coming down from between The Howlands Butte and Angel's Gate. A few minutes walk upstream brought me to a small flow of water which increased as I went up. About 20 minutes walk from the mouth, I came to a place where I thought I would have to attempt a rock climb to proceed. Only a few yards from the place I saw that the bed turned a sharp angle and the canyon became impressively narrow. There was no barrier at all clear up to the base of the Redwall, but I found that Clubb had remembered the place perfectly. There seemed to be two distinct formations involved in the two stretches of narrows, perhaps Bass Limestone in the lower part and then, beyond a short open area, the Tapeats. Where the upper narrows opened out was a half acre of march and here is where the spring starts. The tributary from the east side of Angel's Gate just cuts a notch in the high wall and the drainage from the southwest side of Thor's Temple drops down into the main canyon by a steep chute. I believe I could have climbed out here, but there wasn't time. I continued east to the Redwall cliff below Cape Royal.

On the return I went across the steep talus to the arm that heads east of Thor. This cutoff must have taken longer than going down the bed to the junction and up. When I was near enough to get a fairly good look at the Redwall at the head I took a picture and turned back. It was not so obviously impossible as the cliff at the east end of this system and I should have gone on for a closer look but I began to feel a bit weak from lack of food. I ought to carry a snack for such occasions. I think the upper end is formed by an interesting narrow gorge, but that there is no hope of climbing out.

When I reached the supplies beside Clear Creek, I ate supper and then decided that there would be no time on Sunday to do any further exploring if I were to get up to the south rim. The time was past when I could spend four hours in Clear Creek and then start the nine miles to Phantom Ranch and then begin the climb out in late afternoon. After eating I moved my gear up near the trail and went to sleep. About midnight the clouds covered the full moon so ominously that I packed up and walked to the Bright Angel

Campground between 1:00 and 5:00 a.m. After an hour of sleep and a leisurely breakfast and a visit with the maintenance man, Schmidt, I started out. The upward trip was broken by a lunch stop and a climb up through the window southwest of the trail at the contact between the Bright Angel Shale and the Muav. The top part of this scramble required care, and the window is not as big as I had thought, only about ten feet wide by twelve high.

There was plenty of water in the two water pockets near the trail where it crosses the wash east of Sumner Point.

Impressions from the air

[March 31, 1966]

The Readers Digest conducted tour happened to be over some of the territory that is particularly interesting to me, and the pilot even did a bit of turning and tilting by request. We were rather high when we passed over Osiris, so I didn't learn anything new. I did get a look at the Redwall on the south side of Flint Creek, and I would say that there is a very good chance that one can get down (yes).

They had called the scenic flight a guided tour, but I found myself acting as the guide among our group. We had a good look at the source canyon of Tapeats Creek. I couldn't tell for sure whether there is water coming out of the cave at this time, but I think not. Thunder Spring was putting on a fine show and we all seemed to feel that it is more impressive from the air than the falls at Havasu. I had to ask the pilot to go a bit to the south or we would have missed Deer Creek Falls by passing directly above them. There was quite a streambed and lagoon separating them from the river.

Just before we arrived above Fishtail Canyon, I noted a long talus that covered the Redwall on the north side of the river. One can come down into the shallow valley at the head of the minor, nameless canyon between Deer Creek and Fishtail and turn to the east when it reaches the Redwall. (Almost. We no longer think this is possible without a rope. Possible, the northern route 2771. P. T. Reilly has told me that a young man, Mortensen and one other have used this without a rope.) Just a short distance around the corner there is this talus. It would be easy to get off the rim at Little Saddle on the regular horse trail and get down to the mouth of Kanab Creek. It would be considerably shorter than either the Hack's Canyon or the Deer Creek routes.

Kanab Canyon isn't seen well from the air since the inner gorge is so narrow. Tuckup Canyon looks fine and impressive. I was also most interested in seeing Fern Glen Canyon from the air, and Bill Butcher called my attention to the Alamo Window before we were past. The long canyons on the south side, National and Mohawk, were also fascinating and I hope that someday not too far in the future I'll be going down them too.

False start, Mount Burro and Havatagvich

[April 7, 11, and 12, 1966]

I left Flagstaff on the 7th with plans for a through 6 day coverage of the Osiris area but the heat combined with my 27 pound pack got to me as I was climbing the granite behind the Bright Angel Campground. I

wasn't used to feeling so debilitated and my self diagnosis was that I am getting too old for this sort of thing. Furthermore, I was worried about the seep above the Redwall on the south side of Shiva. The last six weeks had furnished no precipitation. Rather than tackle something that might become a disaster, I returned to the Bright Angel Campground. After quite a pause and some conversation with one of Georgie's passengers from Prescott who had hiked up Granite Mountain there with Jay Hunt and me, I started back up the South Kaibab Trail. It became progressively cooler in the late afternoon and I satisfied myself that I can still hike three hours and 45 minutes walking time to the rim. I also sat down to eat for an additional 45 minutes, but the total elapsed time was better than my time in early March on a muddy trail.

The South Kaibab Trail is carrying a lot of traffic this spring with the construction blocking the River Trail and the lower Bright Angel Trail. Some of the hikers seem to have no idea as to how much water they will need on the South Kaibab Trail. I didn't carry a full canteen downhill, but I parted with almost all that I had to help three people who admitted they were already in straits. At the end of the day, only about a half mile from the top, I came on a teenager who was trying to sleep in the dust of the trail. His buddies had gone on to the top, and none of them had taken any food down for the entire day to Phantom Ranch and back. Some of my gingersnaps gave him enough energy to get him out.

After a quiet Friday, we invited Sam and Anne and the two grandchildren over for a trip on Lake Powell on Saturday. We played with the kids while Sam and Anne took our boat to Rainbow Bridge and back in good time.

On Monday, I got off for a two day trip to take care of a couple of minor projects. After leaving my plans at the District Ranger's Office, I started out along the Topocoba Road. The Forest Service has put up some new signs. The road is numbered 328, but it is worse, if possible, than it used to be several years ago. Someone succeeded in driving through leaving ruts eight inches deep. There is no moisture left but one has to dodge the deep ruts as well as natural gullies in the road. I parked about one fourth mile east of where the Jeep road leaves to go up on Great Thumb Mesa.

After an early lunch, I started up the draw to the south at 11:30 a.m. I was far enough to the east so that I missed the canyons that drain to the cliff above Topocoba Spring. The terrain was fairly level, and before I realized it, I was at the head of the drainage that separates Mount Burro and Pot Hole Point. After crossing the first valley, I saw the distinctive isolated wall standing west of Pot Hole Point. I crossed the valley back to the north, but then I felt uncertain about the identification. I began to think that the tower I had seen might be Mount Spoon head, so I crossed the valley again and proceeded west. Finally, I was sure of Pot Hole Point and was able to identify Mount Burro. Crossing again where the ravine was quite deep took time, but I finally got to Mount Burro on the north side of the draw that drains to the north of the saddle. I could see a distinct deer trail going up on top of Mount Burro, and it just took some time to walk over and up. I built a small cairn to mark the spot, and it was a help when I returned. Just above this place on the rim, there is a fissure in the Kaibab Limestone that makes a couple of good overhanging shelters and one fairly long cave. I would have needed a light to explore it completely. I stopped looking it over when I saw that I would have to chimney climb down a crack that was getting to be too dark for comfort.

As I thought, the views from the west rim of Mount Burro were outstanding. I could see a lot of the route used by Allyn and me last Thanksgiving. There was a well built, old cairn at the west rim.

On the way back to the car from Mount Burro, I followed a route that was west of the way I had come. I was about 40 yards from the rim of the draw that drains from between Burro and Spoonhead when I came to a hole that seemed very localized, not connected with a crack. Besides several good overhangs for shelter, an arm led away to the southwest farther than I could follow it without a light. When I tossed a rock ahead, I seemed to have come near the end, about 30 yards in all. It might have been my imagination, but the ceiling near the entrance seemed to be fire blackened.

I turned north too soon on the return and I got into the canyons that drain to the cliff above Topocoba Spring, but still I reached the car in a half hour less than it had taken me to go to the end of Mount Burro. Without the mistakes in route finding, one should be able to go from the car to the end of Mount Burro in less than three hours.

To get a location of the cave, I used my compass to take the angle between the center of the peak beyond Pot Hole Point and the center of Mount Burro. It was 30 degrees. I also noticed that there is a surveyors rod with two crossbars mounted on a post set on a hill across the draw. It was 35 degrees north of the line to Mount Burro.

On Tuesday, I drove the car back to the Pasture Wash crossroads and headed for Moqui Tank. There were a couple of places where this road was more nearly washed out than any other I had driven. If the car should slip down into the gully, it would have been hung up. When I had gone five miles, I came to a road that went north and then turned somewhat to the east. I learned at the end of the day that this road comes back to #328 at the cattle guard in the valley where the ranch is located north of the road. Where this road started east, I parked and proceeded a little north of west. After walking for an hour in the direction of Mount Trumbull, I came to the head of Moqui Trail Canyon. I passed the north arm rather high where it is shallow and walked to the trailhead where Allyn and I had topped out in November. The trail shows so distinctly from above that I decided to look for a similar one in Havatagvich before I should start down.

After consulting the Supai Quad map, I headed for Chikapanagi Tank and on to the rim. I spent a few minutes looking at a fissure cave near the rim, but I could see the end by daylight. I followed the rim to the point north of here and decided that the Coconino is the real barrier. There seemed to be a place where it might be partially covered by a talus below and an erosion slope above quite near where I first looked down. However, there was no trail leading to the place from below or above, so I didn't go down to inspect it. I followed the rim around north and then east for a long distance. There was a place not far east of the place where the stream plunges over the Coconino to cross the canyon, but I figured it would be more effort than walking east to where the canyon is shallower. Here and also in the north arm of Havatagvich, the stream cuts a narrow notch into the top part of the Coconino, but I could be morally sure that there were falls and plunge pools in the notch. The entire drop occurred too abruptly. There were deer trails along the shale above the Toroweap Formation, but they seemed never to lead to any lower.

When I finally crossed, I had to go down between two and three hundred feet. Where I came up on the north side, I found a rough cairn to mark the cross canyon route. After eating here, I headed northwest to

strike the rim of the north arm. I saw where this arm collects two branches and then cuts a narrow and steep notch through the Coconino Sandstone. The lower end of the north comes out above an impressive overhang where the Hermit Shale is gone. Horse and deer trails lead up to a spring at the bottom of the Coconino a few hundred yards to the west on the north side of this arm. From here I went west to the point and looked back at the rim I had followed along the south side of the main arm. If there is any place to get through the Coconino in all of Havatagvich, it has to be below where I first looked down, but I don't believe this would be possible either. I think the Indian who told us there is a trail in this canyon was confused in reading our map (no, we got the route later).

I got back to the car in only two hours by paralleling the escarpment that goes east and then south.

South Kaibab to Bright Angel Trail along the Redwall  
[April 16, 1966]

A new hiker, Garth Boyd, wanted to go with Reider Peterson and me. He used to be a two miler in school, but I thought it would be smart to check his present condition and also mine, so we went out and climbed Sunset Crater as fast as could. He easily came within the 25 minutes limit that I have been setting for hikers who wish to go to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back the same day. His time was 19 and a half minutes. I was gratified to find that I could still do the climb in 16 and a half minutes thus tying my time of last June.

We started down the South Kaibab Trail a bit before 8:30 a.m. and reached the departure point in 45 minutes. It was south of the last bit of Supai Sandstone forming a knoll just before the trail starts down the Redwall. We were at once impressed with the fact that the footing is considerably worse along here at the Redwall rim than it is on the way to Pattie Butte. I had estimated that it would take us an hour to reach the head of Pipe Canyon, but it was more like 80 minutes. We were impressed by the display of spring flowers pentemons, loco, and white flowered shrub, and redbud trees. There were also quite a few more birds around than one usually sees in the Grand Canyon.

As we were about to pass the head of Pipe Creek, we saw a circle of rocks that had contained a campfire, and several places farther along, we saw footprints, so that we figure Allyn Cureton was not the only one who ever preceded us over this route.

Just east of the bedrock crossing of Pipe Creek, we examined a small cave. The entrance was only big enough to crawl through, and it didn't get much bigger. At the end there was a bend that made striking a match necessary but the whole thing was only about 35 feet long. This cave, although under only a few yards of limestone, has some rudimentary speleothems, just nodules of travertine.

When we passed the first little cape sticking out from the west side of the rim above Pipe Creek, Boyd looked back and saw a cave entrance that was quite accessible. We had to detour back to examine it. We figure it is the one Allyn told me about. The floor is level and dusty, but the mouth is so large in proportion to the depth that the whole interior is well lit by daylight. The cave is about 30 feet deep and 20 feet wide, and the entrance is about 20 feet high.

We were not quite to Yavapai Point when we stopped for an early lunch. It was pleasantly cool in the shade, a perfect day for a hike. If the day had been hotter, I would have really been short of water. My two quart canteen was empty about 20 minutes before we reached the water station on the Bright Angel Trail at the top of the Redwall. The walking was much easier and faster after we rounded the bend and could look down on Indian Gardens. About a third of the way from the point to the Bright Angel Trail, we came on a large and well built cairn. We didn't take it apart to see whether it contained a claim paper. For short distances we had been able to find deer trails, but after we reached the cairn, there was a rather distinct trail that we could follow easily.

I saw a possible route up the Redwall clear across the canyon, in the bay just west of Sturdevant Point. If one wanted to climb out near Widforss Point, this might be the way.

Marble rim from Tiger Wash to Mile 21.7  
[April 24, 1966]

Pat had spotted a probable way through to the Hermit Shale and wanted me to check his aerial view from the ground.

As usual, driving the reservation roads was more than half the problem in locating a particular place. I should have remembered more about them since I have been over that territory a year or two ago. I left Highway 89 over a mile north of Curve Wash, a big indentation in the Echo Cliffs. I knew I should turn south something like two miles up from the highway, but I felt unsure of the right place. In my confusion, I ended by following a broad valley that angles southwest and parked about seven miles from the highway. I went 0.9 miles beyond a dry tank where Norvel and I left the car when we hit the rim above Stanton's Marble Pier. The car was parked just east of a draw that cuts the fault valley at right angles and also drains into the bay at Mile 24.6. I followed the high ground west of this ravine and came to the rim on the north side of Tiger Wash. I was thoroughly confused about my location until I recognized the slump block on the north rim of South Canyon. Oh well, I had been intending to visit the rim above Tiger Wash some time. Here and all along the rim to the north the views down on the rapids with the river running clear were outstanding.

On the way northeast, I had very clear views of the opposite canyon wall and I could pick out three places where there is a sure way down through the Supai to the beach. Of course the talus above Cave Spring Rapid was one of them. Another was just upstream from Stanton's Marble Pier, and the third was at Mile 25 or possibly a bit upstream. The latter would connect with North Canyon by way of the Hermit and thus would constitute an escape route from the river. At one or two places along the rim, I noticed deep fissures partly filled with blocks of limestone. In one I tried going down. At a depth of 30 feet under some big blocks I found that the crack, rather too wide for chimney climbing, went on down for 30 or 40 feet.

When I came to the bay at mile 24.7, I detoured along the rim until I was able to cross precisely where Norvel and I had entered this wash. I followed rather close along the rim to the next bay, the one that meets the river at mile 21.7. This is an interesting wash since the slot down to the Coconino is very narrow and steep. The slope from about halfway through the Kaibab down to this dropoff is quite steep and correspondingly short. I went east until I could get down the rim cliffs.

When I first discovered my mistake by coming out at Tiger Wash, I should have returned to the car and driven to a better position for reaching the 21.7 mile wash. I had left the car at 9:30 a.m. and when I reached the rim above the right canyon, it was already 3:15 p.m. I had already taken pictures of this supposed route through the Coconino a little to the south of the dropoff, and I was about ready to figure that this project of going down it would have to wait for another day. The thought that Donald Davis would wind up this attempt at once even if he had to reach the parked car by moonlight spurred me on. Also rainpools for a refill in the canteen would make it much easier to return to the car in comfort. I had taken only two quarts of water along.

Walking down the bed was slowed by the large blocks, but I could see quite a few sheep tracks. There were at least four places where the descent was easier because someone had piled rocks up to form a step. At least one of these piles was in the middle of the bed where successive floods would sweep it away, so I would attribute this trail improvement to modern Navaho. One place in the bed was particularly interesting. By some means, the bed had been removed forming a bowl about 25 feet in diameter while a rim of rock no more than three feet thick formed a dam on the downstream side. Earth had blown into this hollow and weeds had grown thick. The presence of so much soil would indicate that no super floods had come down here in the time it took the earth to blow in and for the weeds to grow. I have seen plenty of small deep plunge pools below fairly high falls, but I don't know of another place where the basin is so broad in relation to the narrowness of the bedrock dam.

Before one comes in sight of the final plunge over the Coconino, he gets to a ten foot fall where he has to go along a ledge to the south. Here he must crawl under a leaning rock which forms a short tunnel and then he can get down the broken slope to the bed below. This is where I was first convinced that someone had built stepping stones to improve the descent. The deepest rainpool was below. I think the Indians bring their sheep down here for a drink. I don't think that the improvements are a sure sign that this is a route down to the river. The biggest plunge pool was below a 20 foot drop in the upper Coconino and was inaccessible.

I seem to be deteriorating as a climber and it took a little nerve for me to follow the meager steps and handholds along the cliff to the south to the place where the Coconino looks quite possible. I had put down my pack about 300 yards up the canyon where I had to begin using my hands. Now I could have used the rope I had carried all day. There are at least three places where a climber like Davis or Cureton could have gone down, but I was unsure that I could return and I reluctantly spent the time going for the rope. Even if one could go down here without a rope, I am not sure where he could get through the Supai to the river. (On a later trip, three of us got through the Coconino by a ropeless route, but neither Chuck Johnson nor I could get directly to the river. We needed to follow the Hermit Shale south to Mile 24.5. Later, Al Doty showed us a way through the Supai to the river at the point between main 21.7 Mile Wash and the ravine just south of it.

In getting back to the car, I got up on the plateau to the west of the draw and went south or mostly towards Shinumo Altar. I reached the upper end of the fault valley in which the car was parked in about one and a half hours and found that I had to walk southwest down this valley for 35 minutes to reach the



car. I was plenty tired, but it was broad daylight, about 6:45 p.m. There were some spring flowers and a few birds. I saw only one Mariposa tulip. The day had been breezy and cool, ideal for a long walk.

#### Cave and Mile 21.7 Wash

[May 7, 1966]

I parked the car where the road goes south to Pine Reservoir from the main road west about a mile north of Curve Wash. I was three and a half miles west of State Route 89. I was aware of the fact that I would have to walk more than four miles to reach the rim where I wanted to go down, but my plan called for a trip below the rim to the Colorado River at Stanton's Marble Pier and then to Cave Springs and then to Mile 29 Wash where I would come out by the trail. Whatever distance I saved by driving at the beginning would be added to a rim hike of ten miles at the end. The car was on high ground and would be visible for quite a distance from several directions. I took the precaution of carrying a compass and noting that magnetic south was straight toward Shinumo Altar.

At first when I left the car I followed truck tracks in a northwesterly route, but they ended rather soon near a ruined hogan and I headed across country. For some distance I walked along the bed of a shallow valley that I thought would lead to the correct notch in the rim, but when I started going almost due north, I left it for a draw that was farther west. This was a mistake. About one and a half hours from the car, I came to the rim, I was a half mile south of the right canyon. I finished by getting down into Mile 21.7 Wash right where I had two weeks before.

Before going to the bottom, I noticed across the canyon a peculiar fault line. The rock near the canyon rim had arched down sharply in a slippage that paralleled the canyon wall. Then the strata leveled and dropped with a translational movement. At the west end it is easy to climb out of the canyon. I didn't notice any displacement on the south wall, but I could get up or down there too. I thought the situation worthy of a picture, but when I supposedly finished the roll, I discovered that the lever hadn't been turning the film at all. Thus, my last three trips, two to Mile 21.7 Wash and the trip to Oak Canyon on Lake Powell, are photographically unrecorded.

It was now nearly eleven but I thought that I should take the time to see the deep cave somewhere near the rim on the north side of the canyon. When I was almost out on the north, I thought that since I was so close to the fault zone, I would walk over 20 yards and see it. I was happily surprised to see that it was the deep cave. I hadn't realized that the cave is actually below the north rim by a few yards. If one were approaching it from the north, it would be hidden until he started down. It is indeed an impressive hole. I climbed down 70 or 80 feet and thought I took a pictures of the mouth looking out. I also heard an eerie moan and soon saw a couple of large owls. They obligingly posed up near the entrance in good light, but my camera's click wasn't exposing any film.

Another thought about the legend that victims of an attack sought sanctuary in this cave and then escaped down to the river is this. Pursuers may have seen the defeated escaping toward this cave when they were actually getting into the canyon. If the refugees had 15 minutes lead on the pursuers they could run down past the cave into the bed of the canyon. The attackers could spend their time waiting at the cave mouth, but those in flight would proceed to the river and get across.

About the time I was getting back to my pack in the bed of the canyon, the weather began to look bad with wind and lightning. A few rocks fell from the rim and I ate lunch out of the light rain under an overhang. My determination to go down this extremely narrow gorge began to falter. However, after two rests, the shower seemed to be over and I went on down with my whole outfit. This time I noticed something that indicated the use of this as a route for men to descend to the bottom of Marble Canyon. Three of the places where people had placed stepping stones that I had supposed were for sheep to reach the rainpool were above a narrow chute that would stop domestic sheep. One more (the largest) pile of stepping stones was below this chute.

As before, when I came to the view over Marble Canyon I proceeded with caution past the precarious place along the wall to the south and out to the broken slope of Coconino Sandstone. This time I had a rope and I found a good little shrub that would serve as a support just above one of three likeliest routes. Two weeks earlier I had thought it was a bit steep for safe climbing, especially when one is tired. I had no trouble in getting down safely while holding the doubled rope, and I feel rather sure that I could climb up and down here without using the rope. When I got down to the talus below, I tried coming up a sort of chimney to the east a few yards. I could get about halfway up but I reached a place that stopped me, but this was partly because I knew two other routes that are easier, the one I had come down and another a few yards to the west. On the latter, I had no trouble at all in going up. Two weeks previous I had been down to this ledge but hadn't had the gumption to follow it around a corner or I would have gone through the Coconino then. After I had gone back up to where I had left the pack and canteen, I came down once more using the rope and then pulled it down after me. The place I had gone up was easier and safer than where one has to cross the meager ledge from the bed of the wash to get above the break in the Coconino and it is also easier than the chute before you get down to the place where you detour around a fall by going under a big rock and then use the stepping stones. I had to watch my footing but there were no other difficulties in getting down to the Supai rim above the river. Of the two neighboring cuts through the lower cliffs, the one to the south seems to offer the best chance to get down to the water, but from what I could see from above, it might be impossible to get down about 15 feet at one place only (it goes near the point). I had intended to follow the slope above the Supai cliff to the south until I could find a break to the river at Mile 23.3 or thereabouts. While I was trying to make up my mind to continue along this slow and difficult route, the storm clouds got black and I didn't relish the idea of spending a wet night under my plastic sheet wondering whether the reservation roads were getting too muddy for the car. Furthermore, I saw that since it was 2:00 p.m. by now, it would be a late return to the car if I proceeded according to plan. I gave up the rest of the project and returned to the car. I had a struggle getting up and out to the car. My physical condition may have been the worse for a short night's sleep. I hit the road fifteen minutes' walk to the west of where I had parked the vehicle and I was glad I had gotten a compass bearing on Shinumo Altar.

Dragon and Crystal Creeks and the Tower of Ra  
[May 29, 1966 to June 2, 1966]

Donald Davis and I got to the North Rim Campground Sunday evening in time for a cafeteria meal and a visit with James Richardson before and after his campfire lecture. On Monday morning we found the Tiyo Point Road in fairly good shape and did some looking from the point before driving back north two

tenths of a mile to where we could find the car by lining up the Colonnade with Buddha Temple. Donald was carrying a heavy load of canned food for four days, but we made it to the takeoff point in 35 minutes. We got out on the promontory toward Shiva Saddle as usual, but when we were just reaching the top of the Coconino, Donald saw a band tailed pigeon leave a nest about 15 feet from our trail. We got close pictures of the nest and one egg. When we returned on Thursday, we got close to the brooding bird before she flew.

Down on the saddle, Donald immediately began seeing a lot of worked chips of chert. There were imperfect arrow heads and blades of various sorts. We had another look at the big mesquite pit near the basin rocks. There was no water in the basin after the last three months of drought. However, there was still some buggy water in the waterhole where I had camped last summer and I believe this last eight inches will last until the summer rains start. Just east of this steep tributary, Donald inspected a solution hole that allowed him to crawl in about 30 feet. One pleasant discovery on our trip down the Supai slope was that there is a deer trail about three fourths of the way before it disappears.

When we came to the bed of Dragon Creek, we went on down past the deer trail that bypasses the fall to see the first obstruction. It dropped about 10 feet, not spectacular, but enough. When we got around this section down to the spring, we walked up the very impressive narrows to a higher fall. There was more willow and cut tail growth in the bed than I had remembered from last September and it took us an hour to get down to the junction of Dragon and Crystal Creeks. Something that made us wonder was the skid marks made by a helicopter landing about a quarter of a mile upstream from the junction. Beck's pilot had not put him down here, so it may have been Euler. We camped by a pile of large stones, a low cairn or fireplace on the east side of the creek just below the junction. Our bags were a bit too warm until late at night, but there were few if any mosquitoes.

On Tuesday morning we got off to a leisurely start about 8:30 a.m. and proceeded on up the wash that splits with one arm going to the Shiva Osiris Saddle and the other heading under the Osiris Ra Saddle. We left the bottom and climbed out to the southwest through a narrow fault ravine as I had done two years ago. Again we found traces of copper in the Tapeats.

We felt rather sure that the Stanton Kane Hislop Party had come down the Redwall just east of the end of this canyon head where there is quite a bit of vegetation and there are numerous ledges. When we got close, we found that Stanton's remark about having to jump down the last 15 feet was borne out. Donald was able to climb up over halfway but then he was stopped. As we were getting ready to retreat, he noticed that we could bypass this drop by going up the talus on the west and following a ledge around under the main fall to the east side. I could see from this higher station that the way ahead looked worse than I am used to climbing, and in order not to be completely frustrated for the day, I elected to go back down and head for the river along the Tonto to see how the party started their epochal hike.

The promontory that reaches north from Ra spreads out at the north end. I could now follow Stanton's field notes of his route to the top of the Redwall. They went up a talus at the east end of this wall to a shelf at the very base of the Redwall and then turned to the right toward the river, meaning that they were doubling back over the route that they had followed below along the Tonto. In this way they went west of the fin that projects about the middle of this north facing wall. Beyond this fin there is quite a bit of

broken cliffs and ledges, but the prevailing gradient is even steeper than where I had declined to follow Donald. Especially toward the top, I would say that Stanton was not exaggerating the difficulties. They were three men of more daring than good judgment to even try this ascent.

(While we were away from camp, a group from Phoenix came by. They had come down Crystal Creek. After going up Dragon Creek a short way, they went to the river, crossed, and went out via Hermit Gorge. See Donald Weaver's story in Summit Magazine.)

I was pleasantly surprised to find a fair deer trail most of the way along the Tonto. I noted that there is no chance for a man to try a Redwall ascent anywhere closer to the river than the two ways we had seen. When Kane went off to try to climb the backbone, it was a feature of minor size along the route to the top that I noted on the north exposure of Redwall, not one of the promontories reaching west and south from Ra. I also noticed that one can climb out of the bottom of Crystal at two places along the west side of the course of the creek below the junction with Dragon. The upper one is where the tilted strata of Algonquin age angle up to the horizontal Tapeats, and the lower is quite close to the mouth of Crystal Creek. If I ever want to complete the traverse of the canyon below the north rim from one boundary of the park to the other, I could go from Crystal to Tuna by going up here and then west along the Tonto. Then I would need to complete only the gaps from Tuna to Flint and from Powell Saddle to the Thunder Spring Trail.

By map study I had placed Stanton's pictures across the river. Out on the next point, east of the Tapeats headland and right above the mouth of Crystal, I got pictures to match Stanton's. Back to the north, I had seen a good break through the Tapeats that angles down to the north. Before reaching the place, I found a break that is wider and more conspicuous from the mouth of Crystal. Since a good deer trail went down this one, and since I figure that the Stanton party would have come up here, I chose to descend this one. The way got steeper as I neared the bottom, but it was never really bad. I walked back up the creek to camp in just over two hours, and along the way I identified my camp of two years ago. Although I didn't reach camp until 5:45 p.m., Donald wasn't along until I really became worried.

He finally came in about 8:30 p.m. with a terrific tale to tell. He had succeeded in getting up the Redwall although at two or three places there was no alternative to the very difficult holds he had to use. When he was above the difficult parts but about 80 feet from the top of the Redwall, he had found and explored a fine cave. About 60 feet back where the daylight was about gone, he found a 14 inch olla and in a pack rat's nest were four corncobs showing eight to ten rows of kernels. Then he had gone on around the north side of Ra and had located the place where Stanton stood to take the picture showing Dragon Head and the knobs lined up in front of it. Then he succeeded in climbing the lower Supai cliffs and could walk south to the summit block of Ra. As was to be expected, this could not be climbed but he was able to come down to the Ra Osiris Saddle by an easier route. The sun was down long before he was off the cliffs and in the wash below.

Donald was quite sure he could take me up the route he had followed through the Redwall, so on Wednesday we gave it a try. I don't mind going up a place that may be vertical where the holds are good and frequent, but about halfway to the top we came to a place that was not very steep, but there was dirt over the friction holds. Donald had to give me a hand here, but only a few yards farther I met my Waterloo. He had jammed his fist into a crack and then had reached up with the left hand to a good hold

which was three inches too much for me. I had to turn back and read my magazine while he went back to the cave to photograph the pot in it.

On Thursday just as we were packing up to leave, I saw a mine shaft against the cliffs across Dragon Creek and while Donald was coming to inspect it, he found a box of dynamite sticks under an overhang. The name Hercules was still very legible. We went out without undue fatigue and reached the car about 4:45 p.m.

On our walk down Dragon, we had an excellent look at a golden eagle.

We both came away thinking that Stanton, Hislop, and Kane were taking awful chances to go up the Redwall where they did and then bet their lives on getting down at a different place.

Bridge, Separation, Spencer, and Meriwitica Canyons  
[June 4, 1966 to June 10, 1966]

As planned, Jorgen Visbak, Homer Morgan, John Harrington, and Bill Moos met me at Peach Springs about noon on Saturday. With only 30 hours notice, Jim Ervin had driven 840 miles to join us. Donald Davis was also taking advantage of the fact that I would leave my car at the head of the trail into Meriwitica Canyon. He was traveling by motor bike and I could accommodate his supplies in the trunk of my car. He hoped to find caves in the limestone of the area. Jim Ervin had come to get pictures of the area where he had left the river in late June of 1931 to climb out by what deputy sheriff Nelson called an impossible route. He had recently written an account of his near fatal adventure which had taken the life of his companion. They had become discouraged with trying to reach Boulder Dam by hoping freight trains and had heard of a boat at the mouth of Diamond Creek. They thought it would be easier to float downstream, but when they had lost an oar, Ervin decided to abandon the project and get help for his companion who was too weak to attempt the route up the cliffs. At the age of 31, just 35 years ago, Ervin was able to survive this exploit on almost no food and only the water that he could drink before starting away from a spring below the Redwall.

Donald told the down river floaters where to get the road down Peach Springs Wash and they got off soon after lunch. Ervin, Davis, and I started northwest on the reservation road on the other part of the combined trip. First Donald showed us how to get to the road that goes to Hindu Canyon. The Williams Quad map shows this going down into Hindu Canyon and up to the north skirting the head of Bridge Canyon and on out to an overlook opposite Separation Canyon. The turnoff from the main reservation road is clear, about seven miles from route 66, but after passing a mysterious modern building with a white tower, it looks no better than tracks to various cattle tanks. Familiarity with the map and a knowledge of directions should indicate which branch leads on to Hindu and Bridge Canyons. When Davis had taken us far enough to clear up the route, we went on to the Meriwitica Tank road and found the end above the route down into Meriwitica Canyon, west of the tank itself. We had wasted a little time taking a detour of three miles and back to Willow Spring, bone dry at this time. Along this road I had shaken the tail pipe loose from the muffler and I would have had trouble if Jim Ervin hadn't pulled out the right tools and fastened the pipe back in place. He impressed me as a very capable man in an emergency. I left Donald the key to my car trunk and went back to Ervin's car to take off for Bridge Canyon.

We drove to the rim above Hindu Canyon and left Ervin's car just before reaching a place where the road starts down a long grade. We had a map that Dock had furnished showing where the search party had gone down in 1931, but I didn't get in mind the fact that they had driven cars farther at the time than we had in 1966. When we had been walking down Hindu Canyon for nearly two hours and darkness was starting to settle down before we came to a turn to the north in the road, I began to feel that we might be going to the west of the head of Bridge Canyon. I called for a turn to the north up a draw although the road went on west. A few hundred yards up this draw, we noted a few deer trails, but no assurance that we were on the right route. When we stopped to eat, Ervin discovered that he had picked up only his bedroll and had left the only food he had brought along back at the car. He had purposely brought no water because he remembered a spring at the bottom of a long set of switchbacks. I gave him some of the food which I had figured would last seven days and he drank as much of my one and a half gallons of water as he could. He was walking well for a man of 66, but I could see that he might have a hard time getting out if he went the full distance that I was prepared to take on. He also showed that he would not be able to show me much about the route since he said that he was still too beat when he came with the rescue party 35 years ago to do much more than tag along. When we left his car, I figured that it would be safe for him to come back up Bridge Canyon alone if he took my gallon plastic jug of water, but now I changed my mind. I figured that I might have to skirmish quite a while before finding the head of the Bridge Canyon Trail and that we might not reach water before noon the next day. When I suggested that he allow me to go ahead and get the pictures he wanted while he went back to his car and civilization, he seemed happy enough to follow this idea. It was almost dark, but I figured he could reach the car in two and a half hours and the lateness would simplify the thirst situation.

I went up the main draw that turned slightly to the east and finally came out on the rim of an impressive canyon which I took to be Bridge. In going up here, I detoured a bit and inspected a shelter cave that showed smoke on the ceilings. The rim to the east was still higher, and the head of the canyon was to the west, so the last daylight had directed me to go back down to the west. I thought I might just retreat to the road, but I followed the rim and soon came to the end of the two tracks where I suspected that morning light would show the beginning of the trail. Here I slept with the comfortable feeling that all was well for the next day.

On Sunday I saw that I had guessed right. There was a terrace for a shack, a wall for a corral, and the beginning of the trail going down through a slot in the Redwall. Little trail was left in the ravine, but below I went to the east on a 1500 foot descent and at the bottom near the remains of some floor tents was the spring with a cement catchment basin. I went on with more than enough water to see me down to the river even if I found no more. The wild burros in this section of the canyon have reached a saturation point and the trails are in a fine state of preservation. As was indicated on the map, the trail to Ervin's ascent led around the rim of the inner gorge to head the next canyon to the east. What surprised me most was the prevalence of water. Some was flowing below the Tapeats in a minor gorge between Bridge and the one I had to head, and Ervin's spring at the base of the Redwall was quite a little brook which made a pleasant sound as it came over the ledges from above. I could see the ravine with the wet vegetation he described, and around to the southwest, I could see where he had actually gone up. There were a couple of rather continuous small cliffs where a route was not apparent, but most of the way to the top would be well within my capability as a climber. Maybe Davis or Cureton would like to try this place. I would rate

it as more promising than where Stanton, Hislop, and Kane went up and down the same formation. Out on the rim of the inner gorge, I could see the rectangular rock that projects into the river and I saw a logical route up to the Tonto Platform. Everything was just as clear as if Ervin had come with me. I was impressed with the clarity of his memory of the area. Of course, he had seen the situation once when his life was in doubt and then again four days later, but 35 years usually plays tricks with the memory. At first I had thought that I would go down to the river at Bridge Canyon City on the old trail. The catch was that I had forgotten its precise location, and to complicate things, I had picked the wrong canyon on the north side of the river as Separation. I hadn't yet seen the real Separation and I concluded that one entering the Colorado only a little way below Bridge Canyon was Separation. In going to the west, I saw a chance to get across Bridge Canyon with breaks in both Tapeats walls. When I reached the bed of Bridge, I changed my mind and decided to try going on down to the river. There was one place where I preferred going down experimentally without my pack, and then I decided to make sure there were no other bad spots before I went back for the pack. In going back, I happened to glance up a side ravine to the east and saw what gives the canyon its name, a natural bridge. It is only an easy ten minutes from the river.

The mouth of what I took to be Separation was in plain sight from the bank at Bridge. I saw at once that the air mattress floating was different here from what I had done in Marble. I had to push off into some rough water and float through with the mattress crosswise. I like to keep my feet up and my body on the mattress, but soon I was hanging with my feet straight down. It was a bit disturbing to struggle up to proper paddling position lengthwise on the mattress only to encounter another rapid before I could land and warm up. I did land just upstream from the mouth of what I had taken as Separation, but when I pushed off to get around a projecting rock, the current caught me and swept me by before I had time to see whether my friends were there. This further disturbed my piece of mind, and I landed quite soon on the south bank where a ravine came down to the water. I was so cold that I shivered for ten minutes. This experience shook my enthusiasm for floating in this section at this stage of the river. I learned later that the other four floaters were in fine spirits and were thoroughly enjoying the trip. Their surf rider floats and foot flippers worked fine. However, Jorgen went through Diamond Creek Rapids on what was intended to be only a practice start and was unable to take a pair of shorts he had left in the car. When I remarked that Diamond rapids looked shallow and that I would be afraid of hitting rocks, he said that he had scraped on a couple with no harm done. Apparently the proselytes are now better believers than the missionary.

The beach where I had accidentally landed was quite interesting. I found a trail leading up to a couple of terraces to the east and a further trail going to the igneous cliff, probably for the purpose of mining although I could see no shaft. On Monday morning I went up to the Tonto Level and walked a bit to the west. I could now see that the real Separation Canyon was quite a distance downstream. If I had brought my pack up with me, I would have continued along the fine burro trail over to Bridge Canyon City where the other men had spent Sunday night. I know that Mrs. Lamb would be up late Monday afternoon, and I wanted to be on my beach when the boats came along. I spent the day finishing my Time Magazine including all the ads and letters to the editor. Eventually, the boat arrived and took several of the visitors up to float through Mile 234 Rapid. Then they took me aboard and down to Separation where we all had a wonderful steak dinner with tossed green salad and baked potatoes.

On Tuesday morning, Bill Moos and John Harrington went back to Las Vegas with the boat. Jorgen, Homer, and I waited until the boat party was about ready to leave and thus got off to a late (9:00 a.m.) start up Separation. I carried about a gallon of water, Homer two quarts, and Jorgen one quart. There were spots of running water in the bed until we were about a half hour from the river, below a row of impressive holes in the deep brown sandstone 200 feet up on the east. The day was hot and there was no more evidence of water. I was glad I had water to share with Jorgen, but all of our water was gone at least an hour before we got back to the supply in the creek.

With such a late start, I had no ambition to do more than get up through the Redwall, and as a limited objective, I figured that it would be satisfactory if I could photograph a possible way. We were glad that I had Reilly's information that the west and north arms are to be ruled out at once. We probably would have gone up the north arm with no advance information. About 15 minutes past the west arm, we reached the first obstruction, a narrow channel leading into the gray limestone. I would have started up the clay slopes to either side, but Homer went right in. Jorgen gave him a boost and then he pulled us up bodily. Not too much farther on we came to a long winding narrows in an 80 foot formation. I, with my usual pessimism, announced that the odds were 9:1 that it wouldn't go through and that we would have to retrace our steps to climb around the rim. Homer led us in. The question was in doubt for at least a quarter mile, but finally he showed that one can walk right up on a bed of gravel.

Not far beyond the mouth of the north arm, Homer stepped very close to the tail of a rattlesnake that had its head under a rock. It didn't rattle until Homer tossed a couple of small pebbles at it. I noted a couple of places on the north wall of the canyon where an expert climber could probably go up the Redwall, but by keeping to the the branch to the east, one can go right on up out of the Redwall along the gravel and boulder strewn bed. Time was running out especially in view of the water shortage. While Jorgen rested in the shade of a very interesting narrows in the Redwall, I went ahead and climbed up a bushy slope to get a view ahead while Homer went ahead along the bed. It was interesting to see that on the north side of the Colorado, the upper formations are still intact. I could see the Hermit Shale with a long white cliff above, the Coconino Sandstone (thin) combined with the Kaibab Limestone. Over to the northeast, I could see a rockslide through all this upper cliff. If I ever come in by car, it ought to be easy to come down and reach the place we turned back. Separation is a long and impressive canyon. One wonders whether the Howlands and Dunn were playing the percentages right when they assumed that they could climb out. They picked the right canyon, but how could they have known.

Even my 59 year old timidity couldn't see much danger in Separation Rapid on a mattress. However, I figured a way to beat the cold water. The Las Vegas party were going to stash their surf floats and swim fins at the mouth of Spencer Canyon and get them later by boat. Since there was no extra carrying involved, I borrowed one of the floats used by Harrington and Mooz and put it on top of my regular mattress. I was able to lie up high and dry with my only worry the matter of tipping over. At a couple of boils, this was a real problem, but almost all the time we had a peaceful 6.4 mile float. There was a good current, but I could have gone to sleep on my soft bed. We stopped on three nice beaches before we reached Spencer Canyon. I didn't eat all my lunch until I reached the spring water coming out of Spencer because I had had 12 hours of intestinal trouble from using Colorado River water. Apparently my five year old Halazone tablets have lost their potency,



There was no problem in recognizing the mouth of Spencer since there is a prominent lava deposit on the north bank opposite. You see the bell's peak in the Redwall as you float down the Colorado, and you expect fine scenery. Spencer fulfills all expectations and then some. Verdure also lines the bank and slows the walker. About two hours walk upstream, past a small fall or two, and past a dry wash from the west, you come to the mouth of Meriwitica. It is easily identified by the small tower of granite with the creek bed split around it. Homer spotted some tools used by a prospector cached high on this castle. He took the shovel to help level his bed site and also to help in the construction of a dam which held enough water to let us float, a cooling process that all enjoyed a couple of times a day. We camped at the big cottonwoods upstream from the mouth of Meriwitica. One memorable view was obtained from the Tonto level several hundred feet above our camp. We could look around in the evening light at the Bells and other pinnacles on both sides of Spencer and Meriwitica. The downhill side of the travertine deposit left by the Meriwitica Spring was amazing. There must be a greater volume of natural cement here, roughly 350 feet deep and hundreds of acres in extent, larger than in any man made structure in the world. It has a little brother formed by the spring one and a half miles farther up Spencer, but the Meriwitica Spring must have left 100 times as much travertine. A caver could go wild wondering where the lime has come from.

On Thursday, Homer took us up to look at the travertine formed by Spencer Spring. There are some most peculiar walls on top of the deposit. The best preserved goes for quite a few yards fairly straight and ends at the rim above the cliff. I remembered stories of Indians driving stampeding buffalo over a cliff. A roofless rock house back near the upper spring has been occupied by a white prospector. On his former trip, Homer found a can with a note in it reading "So much damn country and no blankety blank gold." On our way down, Homer showed us a good cave that John and he had found. It is rather near the top and is north of the big gray hollow in the east facing wall. One can enter it about 100 feet and walk around a solid center of the largest chamber. It is well decorated with speleothems, many of which ring as you tap them. Slightly lower on the route down, Homer pointed out a six inch entrance with bees entering in a steady procession. On our way back to camp, we disturbed a pair of slate dark hawks with banded tails and light colored beaks. They were apparently trying to keep our attention away from a nest in a tall cottonwood that Homer spotted.

After lunch we walked up to Meriwitica Spring, using the trail which is fairly well defined on the talus south of the travertine cliff. The grove nourished by the spring is an amazing place. It is about 50 yards wide and 200 yards long, but we saw birds of several species including one bright red male. Within minutes Homer was watching a little kit fox and we saw a couple of young jackrabbits as we walked north to the Indian shelter cave.

It is quite a scramble up to the cave but the trip is most rewarding. There are outlines of numerous dwellings. Pot hunters have combed the site. The neatest signatures are printed with charcoal or pencil and read "W. H. Riddenhour, J. Tillman; Dec. 9, 1879." There are still plenty of corncobs around of 8 to 12 rows and a few sherds. After a mosquito infested night, we walked out in fine style Friday morning.

I had been worrying slightly about the safety of Jim Ervin in getting back to his car at night without water, but when we reached my car I learned from a note written by Donald Davis that he had been extremely worried about my safety. He drove clear to Kingman to alert the sheriff, who had then called

my wife and had come out with three deputies to the place where we were to come out. Ervin had also thought that Donald and he should go down the Bridge Canyon Trail looking for me, but Donald assured him that I was used to looking out for myself in the wilderness. The search and rescue squad got in on the act and took their Jeeps down Peach Springs Wash to check that there really was a Rambler station wagon parked at the river. They came back predicting that a tow truck would be needed to get it through the loose gravel where the road follows the bed of the wash. Homer was a little worried also and he had me stop five and a half miles from the river. We carried our lunch to eat beside the Colorado after a cooling dip. Homer also packed my tire chains along as a last resort if he should begin spinning the wheels. On the way down, we threw many rocks out of the high center and in one spot we filled some holes with flat rocks. It paid off since Homer brought the Rambler right through without a hitch.

Donald quieted the search considerably when he spotted a letter in my parked car saying that Mrs. Elinor Lamb of Las Vegas was going to supply the party by boat on Monday evening. Evidently the sheriff reached her and learned that I had safely joined the party and that the last three were not expected out until Saturday.