

INTRODUCTION

By

Neal D. Newby Jr.

I first met Frank Moltzen in the Fall of 1933. My parents had just moved to Leonia, New Jersey and placed me in Miss Rawson's third grade in the Leonia Grammar School.

Frank and I became friends and remained so for the next 77 years. In later years I wondered how it was that we became very close. We were certainly different. Frank came from a large family and I was an only child. I think it was because we were both outsiders. In school neither one of us fit in with the crowd and I had few close friends. Beneath a gruff exterior Frank was a very open and honest person who had a love of birds and animals. He was trusting and tended to believe what people told him. Occasionally people took advantage.

After high school we went our separate ways but remained in touch. Whenever I was in Leonia I would get together with Frank. As the years passed I traveled around the country and Frank visited me in California, Pennsylvania, New Mexico and Colorado. We took a number of trips together.

We often laughed over various adventures we had had. I suppose it was our first trip into the Grand Canyon that remained most vividly in our memory.

When Frank died, last summer, I went from southwest Colorado to New Jersey to attend his wake. Because Frank came from a large family, there were many people in attendance. Although I only knew a few, I felt at home among Frank's family and friends.

At the wake I met Frank's nephew, Mr. Joe Moltzen. Mr. Moltzen has run the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon and was interested in the trip that Frank and I had taken many years before. In conversations with Mr. Moltzen I realized that Frank had said little about our trip and I thought I might try, after all these years, to give an account of what happened.

In some ways the trip was a disaster. Due to an unusual set of circumstances, we were threatened with prosecution by several federal agencies – the National Park Service, the Federal Aviation Administration and the FBI. Just to make a good story, it was suggested that we might have stolen \$5,000,000! Of course we denied stealing anything. However, in later years we chuckled as we told each other that the \$5,000,000 had come in very handy!!!

In order to construct the following account I have used Frank's diary and my diary. Each evening, as circumstances permitted, we would briefly describe the day's events. Also I recently found a long lost audio tape which I had made about a month after our trip.

Our trip attracted the attention of Otis Marston, the well-known historian of the Colorado River. I corresponded with him and those materials are now in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California where I was able to visit and refresh my memory.

~ Introduction retyped from Neal's original account on file with Grand Canyon National Park. His story "Lost in the Grand Canyon" was published in *The Ol' Pioneer* in the fall of 2011 (Vol.22, No. 4), as presented below.

Lost In The Grand Canyon

Neal Newby and his friend Frank Moltzen paddled the Grand Canyon in 1956, from Lee's to Phantom, using two one-man life rafts. They had life jackets, which was good as Newby couldn't swim. They ended up taking 15 days to get to Phantom, after trying to hike out at Nankoweep and Hance. Frank passed on last year, and Neal has written a 13 page account of their trip.

by Neal Newby

The trip hadn't started yet and I was having doubts. From our earliest talks Frank had said, "Neal, I'll have to leave everything up to you – you're the one who knows about the west."

Well, I had spent six months working at a Christian mission on the Navajo Reservation. I had read about John Wesley Powell and other adventurers. But what did I know about river running and the Grand Canyon? It was beginning to dawn on me that I knew very little and my boyhood friend, Frank, was depending on me. My education was about to begin and unfortunately Frank would have to share in it.

It was late summer of 1956. Frank was sitting across from me as we rode the Atchison-Topeka and Santa Fe to Flagstaff, Arizona. Several hours earlier we had passed through Gallop, New Mexico. Two older Navajos were standing alongside the train. They were "long-hairs" with hair tied up behind and were carrying revolvers. I could see that Frank was impressed.

I was a graduate student and tried to gather equipment as time permitted. I had ordered two inflatable life rafts. They were inexpensive World War 2 surplus. Unfortunately they were very small – the kind that fighter pilots sat on. I located a company that sold dehydrated food and ordered what I thought would be sufficient. Maps of the Grand Canyon were obtained from the government. I already had a frying pan and some small cooking pots. I had two sleeping bags and I loaned one to Frank.

As we passed through the Painted Desert of Arizona, Frank stared at the weird landscape – very different from New Jersey.

My mind was on Frank's family

and what they had said to him about this trip with Neal Newby. The previous evening Frank had told me a "funny story". It seems that a week before Frank left, his brother Jimmy had come over to the house. When Frank told him about our trip, Jimmy exclaimed, "You're what!!! Listen Frank, Neal Newby seems like a nice guy – but frankly he looks to me like he needs a transfusion!!!"

When Frank got to Chicago he stayed overnight with his brother, Joe. When Joe heard where Frank was going he started talking about his WW2 experiences – "the flak was so thick you could walk on it". Stuff like that. As if Frank was going to a war zone. After all we were just going to the Grand Canyon on a vacation. I could see that all this talk had made Frank a little apprehensive. I got irritated.

I said, "Look Frank, who are you going to listen to – me or your family. I don't think any of these people have been within a thousand miles of the Grand Canyon and I have." As it turned out, maybe Frank should have listened to his family.

Late in the afternoon, we arrived at Flagstaff. We unloaded our gear – about six big duffle bags and got a room in a little hotel across the street from the train station. At that time Flagstaff was just a small cow town.

I had picked up the idea that the folks at Grand Canyon National Park liked to be told when a party was going down the river. So I mailed a post card to that effect and dropped it in a mailbox. I didn't know until later that there is an elaborate procedure one must go through to obtain permission. What we were doing was completely illegal.

Before we went to bed that night

we talked of the two airliners that had collided over the Grand Canyon several weeks earlier. All 150 people on board had been killed and the wreckage was widely scattered over remote areas. Unknown to us, this terrible accident caused the federal government to be suspicious of anybody venturing into the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River.

The next morning Frank went to Mass at a small Catholic Church nearby. Afterwards, we went to the edge of town and tried to get a ride north to Marble Canyon – about 120 miles. After spending half a day I told Frank we'd need to take the night bus north. I can't blame folks for not stopping. There wasn't much traffic and we would have needed a pick-up truck to carry all our gear.

The bus left about 10:30 and got to Marble Canyon about 1:30 AM. Marble Canyon was just a gas station and café on one side of the road and a motel on the other. We slept out in the desert about 100 yards from the café.

The next morning we awoke to a grand vista. The Vermillion Cliffs soaring 1500 feet and stretching as far as you could see. Blue sky and brilliant sunshine with just a few clouds clinging to the tops of the cliffs.

We had breakfast in the café. Afterwards I tried to find somebody who would be willing to drive us the six miles to the Colorado River.

Frank was a very open and forthright person. That's why I had always liked him. No pretense with Frank. But he was credulous and there are those who, seeing an innocent person, will take advantage.

So Frank got involved in several conversations in which he candidly indicated that he was a visitor from the East who knew little of the West.

One guy in the café, when he found that Frank was headed into the Grand Canyon said, "Hell, you don't want to go down there. That place is crawling with scorpions and rattlesnakes. If I don't hear from you I'll have to organize a search party." Another character in the mechanics shop was changing a tire. He said, "Listen, the Indians put a curse on the canyon. People die down there. Don't sleep under any cliffs." (!!!) Frank was a trusting person. I think he felt that, since these folks lived there, they must know what they were talking about

While Frank was having these conversations, I was trying to find someone to take us to the river. I finally found two Navajos who agreed to take us for \$2. They had consumed several beers for breakfast. We threw our duffle bags in the back of the pickup and had a wild ride.

The road to the river was just a dirt track which wound around and between house-sized boulders. Frank and I sat on our gear in the back of the truck

Frank said, "Neal, this is like being on another planet!"

At the river we threw out our bags and paid the Indians. We would have no contact with anybody for the next 15 days. We were now alone in some pretty uncivilized country and all the negative talk had an effect. Frank looked concerned.

I had figured we would make Bright Angel Creek in 5 or 6 days and had packed food for 10 days. Surely that would be enough. The river looked pretty easy here. But what about Soap Creek and the Grapevine and the Sockdolager. These were famous rapids. Could they really be so bad. I had an uneasy feeling. But Frank was depending on me so I said, "Lets get packed up and hit the old Colorado!"

We got the little boats inflated, My idea was that each of us would have two rubberized bags with gear packed between his legs. However, when we got the bags packed we could hardly fit in the boats ourselves. Finally, we did manage to get into the boats with our bags and snap down the tarp over



Frank Moltzen in his raft.

our legs and the gear. However, the back of the boat came up almost under our armpits. We were so wedged in that we felt trapped in case the boats turned over. Of course, that wasn't going to happen but still... So we ended up riding with our legs on top of the tarp rather than underneath it.

We each had a double-bladed paddle. I can't swim so I was glad that we had excellent life-preservers.

On August 16 we shoved off. It took a while to get used to handling the boats and the paddles. After several miles we drifted under the Marble Canyon bridge. The bridge is 600 feet or so above the river. We noticed some people stopping their cars and running over to look down at us. Several shouted but the echoes off the canyon walls made it impossible to understand.

We camped that night at Badger Creek Rapid. The moon was overhead and bats were sailing around our campfire. It thundered a bit and threatened rain but none fell. I think Frank was awake for a while waiting for the rattlesnakes and scorpions.

The next day we decided to carry around Badger Creek Rapid. We were still getting used to handling the boats and I think we sensed some future problems. Frank found a leak in his

boat. We repaired the leak and had some lunch.

After lunch we drifted along between canyon walls that were slowly getting higher. As we drifted we were aware of a faint roaring sound. As the minutes passed the roaring became louder. And then the roaring was punctuated by sharp staccato crashes. I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. As we approached the place where the river started downhill we landed on the right side and walked ahead to look at Soap Creek Rapid.

I was shocked at the wild maelstrom of white water. Huge masses were crashing into boulders and throwing spray into the air. The canyon was filled with the sound and Frank and I had to shout at each other to be heard. I believe both of us were thinking - if it's like this at the beginning, what can we look forward to up ahead. For me, this was a very sobering experience.

The first part of the rapid looked like shear suicide. We had some nylon rope and decided to try to line the boats around the upper part and to ride the lower, less dangerous, section. It was very hard work because the shore was a mass of huge boulders that we had to climb over. We had a wild ride through the last part of Soap Creek. I almost went over twice

and Frank went half way over but managed to come back.

My boat started to fill up with water and I realized that the handle of the frying pan had poked a hole in the bottom of my boat. We camped a mile above Shear Wall Rapid on the left side of the river. We decided to patch the hole after breakfast

After supper that night we discussed the day's events. Because it was late summer, the Colorado was running at a very low level (number of cubic feet per second). This caused us to encounter rapids where there would be none at higher water. These rapids were not on the river map and consisted of rocks that would ordinarily be covered.

In addition, we began to realize the weaknesses of our tiny boats. The boats were about the size of a bathtub – the inside dimension was approximately 48 inches. When a wave crashed over the boat one had a sudden weight of perhaps 100 or 150 pounds landing on top. If this weight came down on one side, the little boat would immediately start to roll over. So a lot depended on the structure of the waves and finding a path through the rapid which had the best wave structure. Frank seemed very good at this. He would pick paths which had a lot of water and looked formidable but had a good wave pattern. Whereas, I tended to be scared off such places. As the trip proceeded we had many discussions on this point.

Another trouble with the small boats was that one sat very low in the water. As you approached a rapid it was impossible to see ahead. You could certainly hear the rapid but at the top of the rapid the river simply went downhill – disappeared from view. So we would always land shortly before the rapid and walk up to study the situation. We would decide where we would enter the rapid. This was crucial. After entering there wasn't much maneuvering one could do. Then we would walk back to the boats and try to remember the spot we wanted to hit at the top. I didn't always remember – due to excitement or fear.

After we got in our sleeping bags that night Frank said, "Neal, what are we doing down here?" I said, "Frank, we're on vacation."

The next day was wild. After breakfast we hit Shear Wall Rapid. I went first. Frank followed. Right at the beginning I got hit with a wave that spun me sideways and over I went. Waves busted over me. Boat completely upside down. Scary because I can't swim. Thank God for a good life preserver. After a few yards I got hold of my boat and held on for dear life. Frank came up behind me and tried to grab me but I was carried away. There were rocks close to the surface and my legs got bashed. After we got down a ways, I was able to grab the back of Frank's boat and he pulled me to shore.

Laid stuff out to dry and had lunch. After a couple of hours we loaded up and drifted down to House Rock Rapid. I got out and walked ahead to look. Frank said he didn't want to look – he would take my word and follow me down. I thought we could make it. I felt weak in the knees and was hoping Frank would suggest we carry around it.

I never thought we'd get through without turning over. Right down the middle. Frank said the waves were 12 feet high. He said at one point my boat was almost vertical as I climbed out of a trough and up the next wave. Waves broke completely over us. Hit me in the face and chest so hard they knocked the wind out of me. Made it with boats awash and drenched to the skin.

We made a nice camp on the right side a couple of miles above North Canyon Rapid. We liked to camp along quiet stretches of the river. The roar of the rapids made us nervous.

The next day was August 20. It was a bad day. We went down to North Canyon Rapid and portaged around it. Back breaking work. Rode down to 21 Mile Rapid. I got out and looked it over. At this low water, it looked bad. Water was crashing into a big rock on the right side and shooting over a large rock just under the surface on the left side. I was worried. I went back and

told Frank I thought we could make it by going right down the middle.

He said, "Lets go, Neal, I can't stand the suspense!" So the Suicide Squad paddled out and I tried to hit the middle. I guessed wrong. At the top of the rapid I realized I was off to the left but, of course, it was too late. I shot over a submerged rock down 3 or 4 feet into a tremendous curling back wave. Upside down immediately. Lost hold of the boat and paddle. Big waves buried me. Damn scared. Thought I wasn't coming up at first. My legs smashed into some underwater rocks. I sensed I was being swept into the next rapid. Hard struggle to reach shore. When I got to the river bank I looked around and couldn't see Frank. Then I saw him standing on the opposite shore. I wondered why he looked so small. I still hadn't grasped the scale of the Canyon.

My boat was gone and I didn't see Frank's boat. I was in a state of shock. Frank yelled, "What do we do now?". Then I saw his boat slowly drifting around in a backwater. I called over, "Try to get your boat!".

Frank jumped in the river and swam over to his boat, turned it over and threw himself in. How he did it, I don't know. His paddle was drifting nearby. He grabbed it and paddled over to my side of the river.

My boat was gone. I started to walk downstream to see if I could locate it. About two miles downstream I saw my boat hung up on a floating branch on the opposite shore. I hurried back to Frank. I needed his boat in order to get mine. I left Frank with a few supplies and paddled downstream.

I got both boats out of the water. Everything was soaked and I spread stuff out to dry. As night fell I built a fire so Frank would see it as he worked his way down the opposite shore. I waited but Frank didn't show up. The moon came up and cast a pearly glow on the canyon walls. All was quiet. Frank should have shown up hours ago. I shouted but received only echoes and then silence. Where was Frank? I got out my pistol and fired three shots. After several minutes Frank answered with three shots. At

least I knew he was alive.

I became worried. Frank would be walking among and around large boulders. He could have fallen and broken an ankle in the darkness. Around midnight I took one of the boats and some food items and paddled across the river. I started to walk upstream in the moonlight. After walking some distance, I shouted and Frank scared me by answering from about 20 feet away.

We built a little fire and had a midnight snack of sardines and raisins and tea. Frank told me that after I left to get my boat, he had scooped up a pot of river water and gulped it down and then went to sleep on the sand. We were both shaken by the day's events. When Frank woke up it was dark and he had decided to wait until morning to continue walking.

After finishing the sardines, Frank started to dump out the oil from the sardine can. I said, "Frank wait! That's food! That's calories!"

Frank stared at me.

I said, "Look, we need to think ahead." I hesitated.

"I thought we might make Bright Angel in five or six days – I mean other people have done it. Just to be sure I packed food for around 10 days." I paused.

"But we're running into some problems that we didn't anticipate."

Frank looked grim.

"So I just think we ought to be cautious. I mean, I think we'll make it -- but we might have to stretch our food a little bit." Frank didn't say anything.

I told Frank to sit tight. In the morning he could walk down and I would come across the river and get him. I walked down to my boat and paddled across the river and went to bed about 2:00 AM.

Early the next morning I heard Frank's shout and I tied his boat behind mine and paddled across and picked him up and we came back.

At last we were together again. We had both our boats and most of our equipment. We had lost our hats. The cameras were ruined. We had lost the maps that were on top when I turned

over. Other river maps were OK as they had been packed inside. To be blunt about it, we had a good scare.

I said to Frank, "Let's just take it easy today. Everything considered, we're in pretty good shape." Frank didn't say anything.

Using some driftwood and the sleeping bags, we rigged up a little shade – the sun in the middle of the day was brutal. We laid down and I fell asleep immediately. When I awoke several hours later. Frank was gone. Looking around, I saw him standing on a nearby sand-bar. He had taken the foil food pouches and laid them out to spell S O S and was looking towards the sky.

Well, I was thinking along the same lines. I had seen a pamphlet somewhere entitled "Escape Routes From The Grand Canyon". All I could remember was that it might be possible to escape up Nankoweap Creek or maybe the Hance Trail. We went back and sat in the shade and discussed the possibilities. I mentioned that my information was that these trails hadn't been used for years and would be hard to find.

Frank said, "But we don't have the maps". I said I thought I would know when we reached Nankoweap. Frank didn't say anything.

Later, the sun passed behind the canyon walls and the heat of the day was gone. We had some supper and afterwards smoked Bull Durham cigarettes. The moon came and bathed the canyon in a mystical light. The river slid past with an occasional murmur. We didn't say anything.

Finally, I said, "Frank, I'm sorry. I've pretty well screwed things up. But look, we still have our food. And there's a whole river full of water."

I chuckled. "At least we won't die of thirst." Frank was quiet.

After a while I said, "Frank, we made a mistake. We got cocky and thought we were in charge. Down here He is in charge." I motioned towards the river.

"Yesterday He let us know He can smash us whenever He wants – whenever we don't show respect. He wants respect, Frank. We haven't

shown respect."

Years later Frank remembered my odd little speech with approval. Maybe you had to be in our situation to understand. Something changed that night. We now knew the power of the river.

The next morning we made hats out of the foil food containers and bandannas. We had lost a paddle but had a spare half paddle. By fastening the frying pan on the end we had a double bladed paddle. It looked strange but worked.

We carried around 3 or 4 bad rapids – water pounding over and between murderous rocks. We found a nice camp on a high bank on the left side of the river. We were not sure of our position but believed that we were at about mile 28. There was a beautiful view up and downstream from our camp and a perfect natural fireplace. Thunder and lightening but no rain.

The following morning was a beautiful day. We didn't get on the river until the afternoon as Frank didn't feel well – he thinks he strained his hernia in that rapid. We're both unhappy about the cameras being ruined. Who will believe that we were ever down here? Had coconut pudding and gingerbread with icing for lunch. The dehydrated food isn't bad.

After lunch we carried around one rapid and tried to carry around another but finally had to cross to the other side to get around. We were up to our waists in mud and water. We camped above a very mean looking rapid. Water churning over tremendous rocks. A person thrown out here would be smashed to a pulp. Apparently due to low water many of the rapids that we have trouble with aren't even on the maps. At this stage some of them are definitely worse than the ones that are on the map. Frank and I agreed we would rather run Soap Creek than this one. The cliffs soared overhead. Our camp site was among some large boulders – some half the size of a house. I suppose they had fallen from the cliffs thousands of years ago. After I got in my sleeping bag I couldn't sleep. I thought Frank

was asleep.

Suddenly he said, "Neal, are you awake?". I said I was.

Frank said, "Neal, what do you suppose happens down here when there's an earthquake?".

The next afternoon we ran about 4 rapids. Frank asked to lead the way. I followed a short distance behind. I was shocked by Frank's actions. Just as he reached the top of the rapid he looked ahead and dropped his paddle, crossed himself and disappeared down the rapid. This scared the hell out of me. Later on I realized that Frank was a better river runner than I. Maybe crossing yourself helps.

That night we had a beautiful camp near a spring with clear, fresh water. The moon rose and cast strange shadows on the canyon walls.

I had several gashes on my legs from getting thrown into the rapids. Low water causes the rocks, which should be well covered, to be close to the surface. My big toenail was turning black. Walking was painful. My morale was going downhill. The trip had been a disaster and I felt responsible. I thought we should try to find one of the escape routes if we could. However, these routes involve a lot of walking and climbing and I was not sure I could do it. I suggested to Frank that he might have to leave me with some supplies and go ahead to get help.

Frank said, "I'm not going to leave you, Neal. We'll make it".

The next morning we had Farina and "Golden Drop Cakes" for breakfast. We put a patch on Frank's boat but it still has a slow leak. Had a good day. Ran 8 rapids and carried around one. We both thought we could make the one we carried around but thought it better not to chance it. "Show respect"

Frank called the shots on several today. When he is in the lead, he always drops the paddle and crosses himself. It only takes him a fraction of a second. Then he grabs his paddle and disappears from view.

On one I didn't bother to get out and look. Frank checked it and came back and said it was a "choice rapid".

That is, you could play it on the left for a slow ride or play it on the right for "kicks". I think Frank is beginning to enjoy himself. I tried to stay left but got swept to the right. Waves busted completely over me. Didn't go over but the boat filled with water.

On another rapid, Frank led the way. I tried to follow but didn't paddle out far enough. Fast water swept me onto an underwater rock where I hung up for a second and then was twisted off sideways into the main rapid. For a moment I was facing upstream. Managed to get turned around. Why I didn't turn over I don't know. Frank seems to have a knack.

We had a beautiful camp that night. When we landed we were soaked to the skin and shivering. As soon as we got out of our wet clothes, the hot wind dried us off. Stew and biscuits for supper. It clouded over. Again lightning but no rain. We patched the boats the next morning after breakfast.

The next day we made a good run of about 12 miles. Finally, we found our position on the river maps. Ran 7 or 8 rapids. President Harding Rapid was a good ride. Nearby we saw a yellow boat. Later we learned that it was Bert Loper's boat. He was a veteran river runner who died in one of the rapids. No carries today. We are camped at Nankoweap Creek. I felt we should attempt to exit the Canyon by finding the trail out to the North Rim. Frank seemed to agree. My feet were painful but I felt we should try.

The next morning we started walking up Nankoweap Creek. It is a very small creek with clear, fresh water. After some miles it opens out into a vast amphitheater several miles across. However, this amphitheater is completely surrounded by thousand foot cliffs. Apparently there is a way out, but we couldn't find it. After studying the situation and using binoculars we decided to return to the river. (Later on, after talking with Ranger Dan Davis, I realized that, even if we had located the trail, it would have been a brutal climb to the North Rim.)

We finally got back to the river about an hour and a half after dark.

My feet were very painful and we were both extremely tired. We had a supper of rice and onions and then crawled into our sleeping bags. It seems that the junction of the Colorado River and Nankoweap Creek is a very windy place. During the night the wind blew a gale. In the morning our sleeping bags were covered with sand.

August 27. A good day. We ran from Nankoweap Creek to just above the Little Colorado River. We camped on a sandbar on the right side. Ran about 10 or 12 rapids. Carried around Kwagunt - too many rocks and too little water. Ran 60 Mile Rapid and it was a good one. One wave threw the boat up in the air so hard I thought I'd get thrown out! My feet are very sore. Big toe nail was black and about ready to come off. I told Frank we should try to get out of the Canyon at the Hance Trail - if we can find it.

Some distance above our camp are several pieces of plane wreckage from the accident last month. Frank walked up to the wreckage and picked up a "souvenir" which appears to be some sort of an engine clamp.

We had a good supper of stew and hot biscuits and dessert of cake and pudding. Not bad. Unfortunately, our food supply is running low. This trip is taking longer than I had planned.

August 28. Today we ran from just above the Little Colorado to this spot above Unkar Creek Rapid. It seemed as if we ran one rapid after another. No carries. In Lava Canyon rapids we had the largest waves so far - 15 feet or more. However, almost all the water was on one side so the waves had a regular structure. The rocks, if any, were well covered up. It was like a roller-coaster ride. Tanner Canyon Rapid was a great ride also. Once I was completely buried under a tremendous wave and almost thrown out of the boat. We have a nice camp back from the river in a grove of tamarisk. It threatened rain but only a few drops fell. Had a good supper if I say so myself - hamburgers, mashed potatoes and carrots. For dessert - "Golden Drop Cakes" with icing.

August 29. My feet hurt bad last night - didn't sleep much. This

morning I took pus from under my blackened toenail. Before leaving camp a search plane came over. We were hauling our bags down to the beach. Frank was on the beach and saw the plane first. He called to me and I came limping out of the tamarisk at a great rate!! The plane flew over 3 times and waggled his wings. (Later I found out that Dan Davis was in the plane. My father had become worried when we didn't turn up and had asked to have someone look for us.)

The first rapid we ran was Unkar Creek and it's really downhill. We ran everything down to Hance Canyon and arrived about noon. Frank cooked up lunch – Indian pudding and fruit sauce. We talked over the situation. I was nervous as I thought about the big rapids up ahead – Grapevine and Sockdolager. I said we ought to try to escape up the Hance Trail.

Frank said, "What about your feet?"

I hesitated and finally said, "Well, let's see if we can find the Hance Trail. Let's give it a try."

Frank was unhappy with my decision.

After letting stuff dry out a bit we stored most of our equipment under a big overhanging rock. Frank carried a heavy bag and I carried the pack. We started up Hance Canyon. We could see no trail. After about 3 miles we camped for the night.

The next morning after a handful of dried fruit apiece we started again. I was sure I was on the trail. After about 2 hours of risky, back-breaking climbing we reached a gap in the top of the cliff. To my shock the "trail" ended in empty space. I was looking down a sheer drop of 800 feet. There seemed to be trails and droppings all over the place. (Later Dan Davis told me that most of these "trails" are due to wild burros.)

As we retraced our steps down the steep slope, Frank dislodged a boulder. It rolled down on me. I tried to ward it off with one hand and fell down. It scraped my hand and rolled over my leg. Nothing was broken but some scars were created.

We were discouraged and retreated

to a huge boulder in the bottom of the canyon. On one side there was a natural overhang. A good place for a camp. We decided that I would go ahead to see if I could locate the trail and Frank would go back to the river to get more food and water. We would meet at this boulder at nightfall.

Very rough walking. The canyon bends around to the left. Far ahead I could see sheer walls rising thousands of feet. After resting, I resumed my search. I couldn't see any trail whatsoever. But lots of apparent trails and droppings. Studying the cliffs up ahead, I could see no way out. Maybe there was one, but I couldn't find it. I made up my mind. We would go back to the river.

I had a little trouble finding our camp – lots of intersecting canyons. I should have been more careful and built some cairns to guide me. Frank was there. I saw the smoke from his campfire drifting above the huge boulder. He had our sleeping bags laid out and a big pot of hot Indian pudding and fruit mixture ready. It looked better than the Waldorf-Astoria to me!

After supper we rolled some smokes and discussed our situation. Frank seemed very happy that we were going back to the river. He knew I was concerned.

He said, "Neal, after what we've been through, I think we can handle it."

As dawn broke the next morning, Frank was fixing breakfast and I was watching him like a lazy bum. I don't understand why Frank is so cheerful. He is whistling and singing to himself, "we're going back to the river!". From what I've read, two of the worst rapids are up ahead of us. Now I'm the one who looks grim.

We got back to the river in about two hours. After dragging our gear from the overhanging rock we carried down to the last half of Hance Rapid. At this stage of water Hance is a confusion of rocks and boulders. Running the lower part of Hance Rapid filled our boats with water. We landed and emptied them.

After a short distance we came to

Sockdolager. We stopped and looked it over very carefully. However, we could only see the upper part of the rapid. We decided to try the left side. Frank went first and I followed. I lost sight of Frank behind a large boulder. When I caught sight of him again, it was just in time to see him thrown violently upside down. He was about 300 feet in front of me. He managed to get his boat righted – I don't know how – and fling himself in just as he was being swept into the lower part of the rapid. Well, I guess we never figured out if it was the lower half of Sockdolager or a completely different rapid..

We landed and emptied water from the boats. Now we could see the lower half of the rapid. It looked rather bad to me. Water was sweeping down and around to the left and crashing against the canyon wall. I didn't like it but Frank thought we could make it.

We rode it. The river carries you into the canyon wall and then a huge backward crashing wave flings the boat back. I was flung back sideways and thought I would go over but didn't.

After landing and getting water out of the boats we proceeded down to the Grapevine Rapid. We walked up to take a look. As we shouted at each other above the crashing of the waves, I told Frank that it didn't look as bad as I had imagined. Frank didn't say anything. Then he said, "Neal, I don't like this baby." As usual, Frank turned out to be right. It was a confusion of water and rocks just below the surface.

Frank led the way down by shooting through a five foot gap between two boulders on the right side. I followed but got too far to the right. Waves slammed over my boat and it filled with water. I lost control and was spun completely around. A huge wave broke over the boat and turned it upside down. The water was very fast and powerful. I was swept over rocks and between boulders. I tried to keep my body as close to the surface as possible but bashed my left leg and right elbow. First I was going down frontwards

and then backwards. Plenty scared. I was just praying that my head or body wouldn't get a direct hit. Finally was able to grab my boat but couldn't get in. Frank was waiting in a backwater below the rapid and fished me out.

After emptying the boats we went several more miles and camped around mile 85. It was a nice camp. We both felt relieved to have gotten through the Sockdolager and Grapevine. Due to my poor planning, we were just about out of food. The only thing left was a package of dehydrated carrots. We boiled them for a couple of hours and then gave up. They were still as hard as stones.

As we sat around the campfire, I rolled a Bull Durham cigarette. I noticed Frank wasn't smoking.

I said, "where's your tobacco?"

Frank said, "I'm all out." I tossed my tobacco bag over to him.

He said, "No, Neal, I don't want to take yours". I insisted. But that's the kind of man he was.

September 1. Got up about dawn. I chewed on some of the carrots from last night. Frank said he didn't want any. We loaded up and ran a few small rapids. About two or three miles above Bright Angel Creek, a plane flew over. Later we found that my father was in it. He had been at an engineering conference in Los Angeles. When we didn't show up he came to the Grand Canyon to join in the search.

About 9:30 we finally drifted under the suspension bridge. After we had started to unload, Dan Davis – park ranger – came over and shook hands. He took some pictures of us which we were very happy to get since we had only gotten a few on our trip. Then he took us to the Ranger Station and made us a pot of coffee. We had been out of coffee for a week. Later we went to Phantom Ranch where we had lunch. A wonderful lunch – family style – all you can eat. I'm afraid they lost money on us. Frank said he lost about 20 pounds on the trip. As the pictures show, my clothes are just hanging.

We packed our gear. The mules will carry it up. Davis was very kind, offering us help, cigarettes, pipe

tobacco etc. I asked him what he thought of our trip.

He said, "well, you guys cut it pretty close". Then he said that Mr. Coffin, the Chief Ranger at Grand Canyon National Park, would like to have a conference with us. It sounded slightly ominous to me.

Frank and I finally got away about 2:30 PM. We carried a pack with water and a few essentials. I found it a rugged climb. About half way up we met my father and walked the rest of the way with him. Reached the top at 8:30. He treated us to a nice dinner and had rented a cabin. We took hot showers and went to bed.

The next morning we had a meeting with Lynn Coffin, the Chief Ranger, in his office. He read us the regulation which prohibits trips such as ours without specific permission from the Park Service. I asked him where, in the Park Service literature, this was explained. He said that ignorance of the law is no excuse and warned us that we could be prosecuted in federal court.

He told us that when he received my card from Flagstaff, he radioed to government men at Lee's Ferry to try to stop us. The Indians dropped us off about half a mile below Lee's Ferry so we were able to slip by. Mr. Coffin said that he wouldn't have given two bits for our chances. He said several bodies had been fished out of the river last year and he didn't want any more.

Coffin hinted that perhaps the reason we took so long was because we had carried around the rapids. I told him that we had run every major rapid from Nankoweap Creek down to Bright Angel except Kwagunt and Hance. These we judged to be too dangerous because of low water. The rapids we did carry around were up in Marble Canyon at the start of the trip. I explained that we had a total of five turnovers. To my surprise, he seemed surprised.

He said, "your boats turned over?"

I pulled up one sleeve and both pant legs. My hand and arm and legs had ugly brown scabs where I had been scraped against underwater rocks. It wasn't pretty. He looked

away.

The next thing on Coffin's mind was the plane wreckage. Did we see any wreckage. Yes. Did we visit any wreckage. I hesitated and said no – hoping Frank would remain silent, which he did.

Coffin said that the FAA was in charge of the crash investigation and because we had been in the area he would have to notify Washington. Then he said something like – "and we know that ...". He didn't finish the sentence. It wasn't until later that Frank and I found out what was on his mind.

That evening Frank and I attended a showing of the Kolb brothers movie about running the Colorado River in the early years of the 20th century. The Kolb brothers, then about 80 years old, were some of the earliest river runners. After his store was locked up for the night we sat and talked with Mr. Emery Kolb. He seemed very interested in our trip and told us some of his experiences on the river. He said that with boats like ours he figured that we got as many thrills as anybody gets – no matter what stage (of water) they go down. It was a privilege to talk with one of the pioneers of the Colorado River.

The next day my father drove us to Flagstaff and we boarded the train for the east. Frank went on to Chicago while I got off in Indiana to return to school. Thus ended our Grand Canyon adventure – or so we thought.

Several days later I received a call from Chicago. The gentleman on the other end said he was with the FAA and wanted to come down to Bloomington, Indiana to interview me. He said he would come down the following evening.

I immediately called Frank back in New Jersey. I wanted to be sure we had our stories straight. To my surprise, Frank said somebody had called him and was coming from New York to interview him at the same time as I was going to be questioned. I sensed possible trouble.

I met my interviewer in a private

office in the Physics Building. We sat down and he showed me his identification. He was cordial. It seems he was interested in me. He said, "Mr. Newby, I understand you're a graduate student here at Indiana. What area are you working in?"

I said, "I'm a graduate student in physics."

He said, "Oh my. What branch of physics?"

"Nuclear physics."

He had a disarming laugh. He said, "Well, you people are really smart. I'm afraid I was never much good in science." Then he got to the real point.

"Mr. Newby my reason for being here is to ask you a few questions about the trip that you and Mr. Moltzen took at the Grand Canyon."

"That's what I figured."

"You see we're a little confused about the planning for the trip. Could you tell me how this trip came about. When did you start your planning?"

I explained that Frank and I had first discussed the trip during the previous Christmas vacation.

"Mr. Newby, that seems a little odd. We're in late September and you're saying that your trip was planned almost 10 months ago." I didn't respond.

"I've been told that you and Mr. Moltzen went down the river with very small boats and minimal equipment. If you planned so far ahead, why didn't you have larger boats and better equipment?" I didn't know what to say. He had a point. He pressed ahead.

He said, "I've been told that your trip was a very risky, dangerous business. It appears to have been poorly planned and done on very short notice."

Now I was beginning to get the drift. They thought Frank and I had gone down to loot the plane wreckage.

"When did you purchase your small boats?"

"I don't remember – sometime last winter."

His cordial manner vanished.

He said, "I wonder if you DO remember. In July the headlines were filled with stories of the two planes

colliding. In August you're in the Canyon trying to get to the wreckage."

"We never went to the wreckage. By that time I had been banged up in the rapids and was having trouble walking."

He was silent for awhile.

Then he said, "From the information that I have, I'm inclined to believe you're telling the truth."

He paused. "You see we know some things. We know that there is at least one gang – there may be others – that are trying to get to remote areas to loot the wreckage. They're communicating with WW2 surplus walkie-talkie radios. These people are ghouls. They steal from dead bodies. What they don't know is we're monitoring them and they're going to

end up in federal court."

I said, "I hope they do."

He was thoughtful for a moment.

Then he said, "I'm not supposed to tell you this, but the FBI is following this case very closely. The FBI knows that one of the planes was carrying \$5,000,000 in negotiable securities."

It took a while for this to sink in. Then I started to laugh.

I said, "What's a negotiable security? I wouldn't know one if it hit me in the face!"

Years later Frank and I used to laugh about this. We told each other – "Boy, that \$5,000,000 has really come in handy!!"

Book Review

by Barb Frizzell Carver
(daughter of Fred and Jeanne Schick)

Many thanks to Nancy Green whose book review on "The Butterflies of the Grand Canyon" appeared in a recent "The Ol' Pioneer". I immediately ordered the book and am anxious to begin reading it as it weaves fiction with elements of history of "my" beloved Grand Canyon. My grandparents, Edwin and Ida Cummings were Canyon residents for many years. Ed was a trail guide, park naturalist and amateur geologist. My grandmother, Ida, worked at the Canyon as a Harvey Girl. She and Ed fell in love, married and my mother, Jeanne, was born. Jeanne loved growing up at the Canyon and had many wonderful experiences living there. She met and married my father, Fred Schick, at the Canyon. I mention my family background as an explanation of my

great interest and love for the Grand Canyon and Harvey Girls.

Several years ago I ran across author, Tracie Peterson, who was writing novels about Harvey Girls. After my initial contact with Ms. Peterson, she and my mother exchanged phone calls and e-mails where she interviewed my mom about life at the Grand Canyon. Tracie was also interested in learning about my "cowboy" grandfather and Harvey Girl grandmother meeting, and marrying, at the Canyon. Tracie's book, "Shadows of the Canyon", features a cowboy and Harvey Girl who fall in love, loosely based on my grandparents. Actually, other than the cowboy/Harvey Girl characters, there is no other resemblance between the story in the book and my grandparents' lives, however, it is a very enjoyable book. I think you will delight in the setting of the El Tovar Hotel in 1923 that is filled with intrigue, history and romance.

