

The Full History of the Roosevelt Rough Riders by George F. Miller May, 1969

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Later on, the cooking was taken over by Merle DeMarce and he has become the Chief Chef of the Rough Riders. We remember, and I'm not sure Merle does, the time that some one cooked the beans that were to have been for a kidney bean salad and they were flavored with vinegar, the end result was not too good. There is also the other occasion when someone insisted that he have Rocky Mountain Oysters on the menu. Merle wasn't too happy about fixing them but he did and they were the toughest oysters anyone ever tried to eat. In fact, the hounds that somehow managed to get on the trip turned up their noses at them. Anything that Merle DeMarce prepares, such as broiled steaks and Dutch oven biscuits, is always excellent. However, I do recall when Vince Rock got into the act, and much to my dismay, he brought along charcoal starter and canned biscuits to serve the Roosevelt Rough Riders. This was just about the end of Vince Rock's reputation as an outdoorsman. As I recall it, this happened at Potato Lake on one of the early overnight stays there.

Of course, one of the highlights of our trips to Washington Park was stopping at the summer home of Joe Greer - Joseph Madison Greer - a charter member of the Theodore Roosevelt Council as well as the Roosevelt Rough Riders. A host extraordinary - a man of keen perception, filled with a love of his fellow man. All of us looked forward to being there at Washington Park with Joe Greer and Matilda and Sue, who were just a much a part of Washington Park as he was.

Supreme Court Justice Levi S. Udall, who has since passed away, was a stalwart on the rides, lent a great deal of dignity, and managed to keep such outlanders ad Fred Knowles and some of the bad boys of the group in line.

Skinny Guerin, who has since passed away, was a familiar man on the ride and because he, like many others, went on the Caballeros Ride at Wickenburg and they would get together and reminisce about their experiences on those rides.

Gene Pyle who spent many years at R-C and is a Payson Cattleman, helped on many of the rides and Howard Childers, the Sheriff, who also belongs to the Tonto Rim Riders, was able to come with us sometimes. The recollection of Father Howard, of the Catholic Church in Payson, is one that tells of his spirit because he would not ride a horse, but traveled by foot on all of the trails that the Rough Riders took.

Wesley Bolin had an Appaloosa horse which he was very proud of but the Appaloosa didn't like Wes Bolin very well and managed to dump him on a couple of occasions. I believe that Ray Frost provided him with an extra animal to ride.

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One thing that the future of the Rough Riders will continue to do, as it has in the past, is to keep the spirit of the west alive. Concern has been expressed about the trails up on the Mogollon Rim country being destroyed by reckless practices in timbering and in mining exploration work which has not been good for the country. It would seem that the preservation of these trails could be one of the major objectives of the Roosevelt Rough Riders. It also goes without saying that a Boy Scout camp in Arizona without horses is like a Boy Scout camp in the Land of Lakes without canoes. There is something about horseback riding that has the vigor of the early pioneers in it. Certainly, it brings men close to Mother Nature, close to God, close to one another in their spirit and their attitudes. While we have never made it a rider where the Boy Scout axe was ground all the time, members have been quite aware of their relationship to Scouting and its objectives. After all, boys create memories and men relive them



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Then too, in carrying out the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt, we remember that not only was Roosevelt Dam named for him, he was the President who made the establishment of the Grand Canyon National Park possible. His name will forever remain in the annals of Arizona history as the President who believed in 'walking softly, but carry a big stick.' Theodore Roosevelt's relationship to the west and the outdoors probably made him one of the greatest Presidents. So as we carry on -- carry on with the knowledge that we built our best spirit in the out-of-doors -- we built, somehow or other, an understanding with one another in an atmosphere that is not filled with the pressures of our contemporary society. Even in this electronic age, we now live in, people are still all important, the most important segment of all society. When we go back to simple things, we again begin to accept those things, which are fundamental to good living - those things that are fundamental to man's achievement - those things that bring out the best in men. So, the Roosevelt Rough Riders carry on.

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