

# THE TELLIN' TAKES ME HOME

REMEMBERING THE CANYON COUNTRY...#3

By Jim Stiles



## THE GREAT FLOOD of 1983...

In 1977, the Colorado River's flow had fallen to a trickle, motor boats floundered and the annual Moab "Friendship Cruise" was canceled. In fact, the 20 year tradition died with the drought. Some predicted the river would never rise again.

Six years later, late spring storms, followed by a rapid warm-up in May, created one of the greatest spring flood seasons of the 20th Century. The Colorado River flow below its confluence with the Green peaked at 120,000 cubic feet per second. Downstream at Glen Canyon Dam, the reservoir rose so suddenly, the torrent flowed over the spillways, carving gaping holes in the cement tunnel. Later, Bureau of Reclamation scientists determined the dam came dangerously close to failing.

At Moab, the river rose to within a few feet of the highway bridge and debris accumulated behind it, putting it at risk as well. The Sloughs almost reached the highway.

Today the open field in the photograph at left is occupied by the Aarchway Inn.

## A VIEW of MOAB from the DUMP ROAD ...1978

Thirty years ago, the Sand Flats Road was known to most Moabites as the 'Dump Road;' Other than a few ranchers, a trip up the hill was to unload some garbage or a truck full of yard waste.

In this picture, seeing all that green space almost makes me want to go out and do some serious grazing.



## THE BARTON BARN at VERDURE

Five miles south of Monticello, US 191 intersect Verdure, a little valley that may have been the blueprint for Paradise. Among the magnificent old farm buildings that nestle at the base of the cliffs, this barn stood sentinel on the east side of the road for many decades.

In recent years, the barn began to deteriorate and became a safety risk to cows and humans alike.

Finally, the barn was sold to an individual in Arizona who planned to use the barn wood in a new home. This photograph was taken during the dismantling.



**US 191 & 400 EAST in 1999**

One of the last “in town” pastures still looked like this in 1999. The cows gave way to a self-serve gas/convenience store a few years ago. The cows are presumed missing or eaten.



**BATES WILSON at NATURAL BRIDGES**

He’s known as the “Father of Canyonlands National Park,” but Bates Wilson came to SE Utah as the custodian of Arches & Natural Bridges National Monuments in the late 1940s.

Until the late 1960s, visiting Bridges, especially, required real dedication and the use of one’s legs. Instead of the cursed loop road that now allows tourists to view the three bridges without walking more than a few steps, the original road was merely a short spur from the old gravel and dirt Utah State 95. “Headquarters” was an old CCC shack, acquired by the NPS, and re-located across the canyon from Owachomo Bridge. From there, it was a hike upcanyon to see Kachina and Sipapu Bridges.

Here Bates stands by, waiting for the occasional visitor.

*And I’ll sing about an emptiness the East has never known,  
Where coyotes don’t pay taxes and a man can live alone,  
And you’ve got to walk forever just to find a telephone.  
It’s sad, but the telling takes me home.*

\* “THE TELLIN’ TAKES ME HOME”

By Utah Phillips

<http://www.utahphillips.org/>

PHOTOS BY STILES

**BACK BONE...8**

**PAUL CLEARY**  
Tulsa, OK



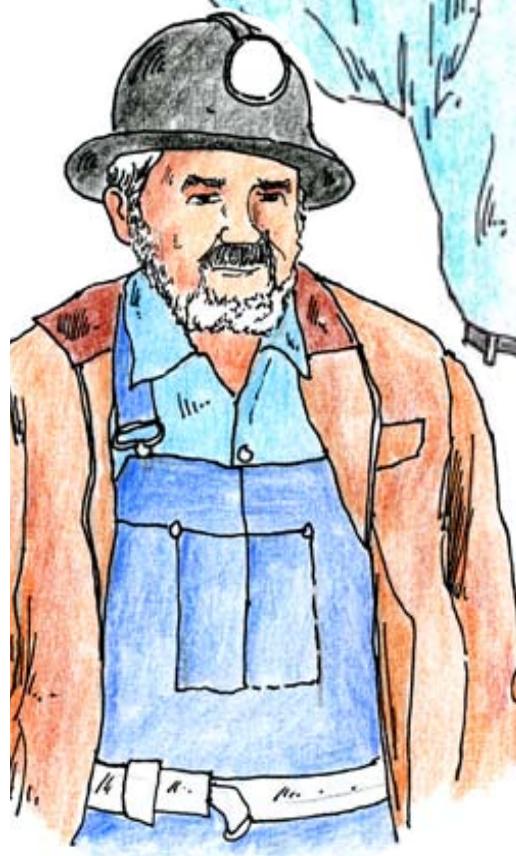
**SCOTT FASKEN**  
GJ, CO



**JOHN TAPPON...**  
Corvallis, OR



**EVAN CANTOR...**  
Boulder, CO



**DON JUNG**  
Modesto, CA



**MIKE SUAREZ...MOAB**