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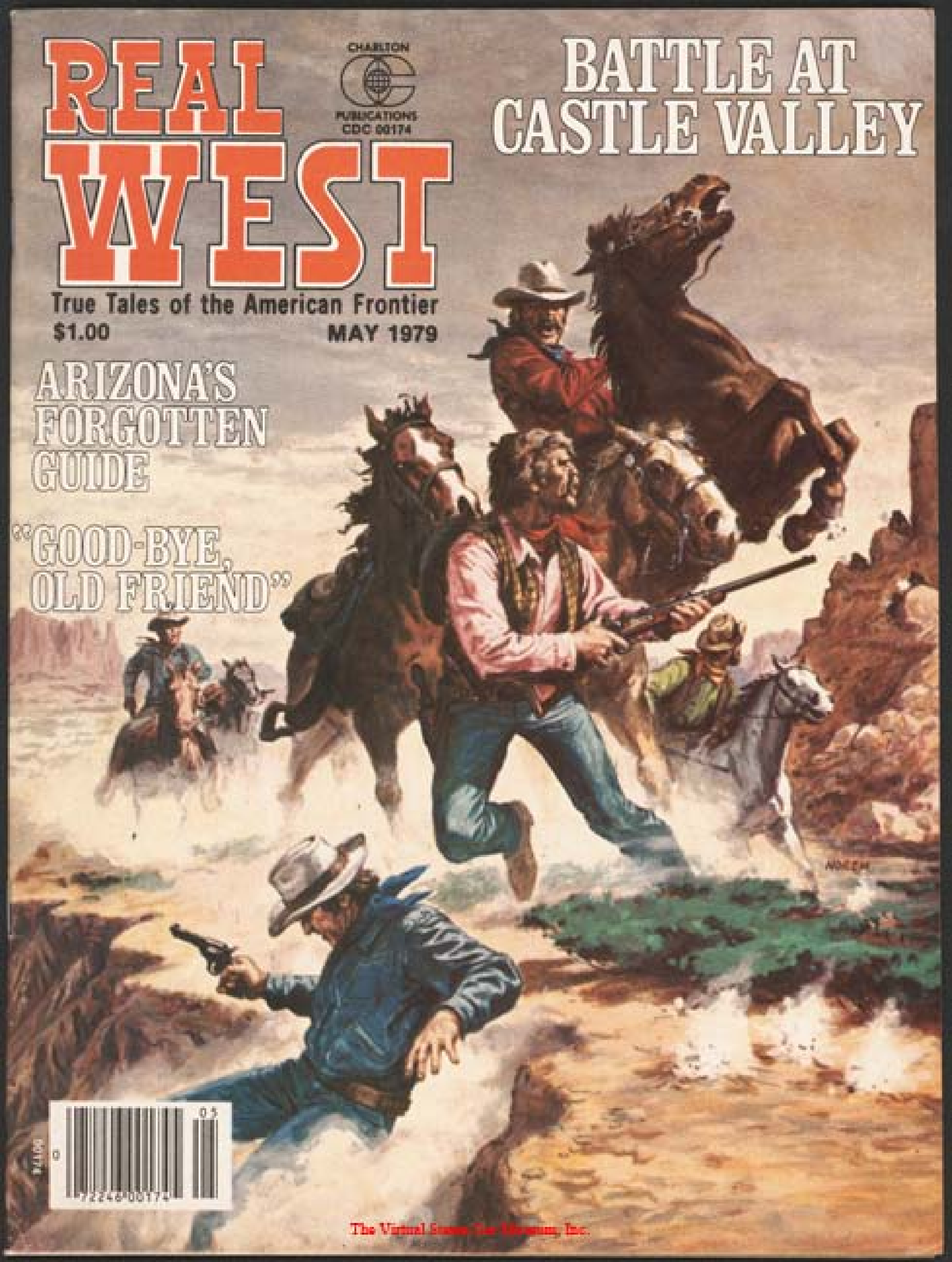
BATTLE AT CASTLE VALLEY

ARIZONA'S FORGOTTEN GUIDE

"GOOD-BYE, OLD FRIEND"



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ARIZONA'S FORGOTTEN GUIDE

by Matt Dodge

Novelists sometimes pattern their heroes after real people they knew. Here is the story of a man whose qualities Zane Grey used for some of his Western stories.

Sharlot Hall Historical Society, Prescott, Az.

Allen Doyle (seated right) poses for the 1896 Yavapai County, Az., campaign camera with Major Doran (left) and Sharlot Hall (standing). Doyle, who was making a name for himself as a wilderness guide, was an unsuccessful candidate for county recorder.

Early in this century, Allen Doyle's firsthand knowledge of Arizona was unsurpassed.

This pioneer guide met life in the raw, and his varied experiences were rich in interest and excitement.

When he died in Flagstaff on Nov. 7, 1921, at the age of 72, the *Coconino Sun* noted: "The sudden death of Allen Doyle was a shock to the thousands who knew and admired him for his sterling honesty, high principles, and public spirit. Everyone in this section who lived here any length of time knew Al Doyle."

Unfortunately, the passing years dim the memory. Today, Al Doyle is Arizona's forgotten guide.

Two northern Arizona landmarks — Doyle's Saddle and Doyle's Peak — are on the map to honor his memory, but there are few historical accounts recording his colorful career.

Al Doyle was a teamster, grader, spiker, and fighter during the Union Pacific Railroad construction. Later, he was a buffalo hunter, miner, cattleman, politician, and lumberman.

For Al, however, life began at 40 when he started to earn a living — and wide respect — as Arizona's foremost wilderness guide.

Along the trail, he shared many adventures with author Zane Grey, and he unknowingly made a significant contribution to the literature of the American west.

In the dedicatory page to his classic novel, *The U.P. Trail*, Grey admits that Doyle's stories helped him sense the excitement of the epic turmoil, labor, and sacrifice that marked the opening of the west.

"I have Doyle's stories of sudden death, terrible lust, and alluring gold ... unforgettable stories," he said. "And it seems as though all the labor, violence, and havoc of those years have become embodied in my imagination."

Al Doyle was born in Detroit, Michigan, on Oct. 22, 1849. Orphaned at the age of five, he was sent to Cleveland, Ohio, to live with an uncle, who sent him to a farmer named Sidley 40 miles away. He had little formal education, but compensated for it later through experience and wide reading.

Doyle sought adventure in the west and in 1866 journeyed to Council Bluffs, Iowa, then the western terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad. The 17 - year - old adventurer moved on to the end o' track at North Platte, Nebraska, where he was hired as a teamster by Caseman Brothers, a railroad contractor.

His mettle was severely tested, since men often took the law into their own hands. Once, a burly teamster, after visiting the local whiskey tent once too often, amused himself by shooting at fellow workers to see how close he could come. Many tired of the sport and decided to hang the fellow. There were no trees nearby, so they set up a wagon tongue as a portable gallows. The condemned man quickly sobered up when he realized what was happening, and he protested that the punishment was too severe. The angry mob paid no attention and proceeded with the execution plans.

At this point, a muscular, cool - headed teamster pulled both of his guns and moved to the side of the doomed man, threatening to shoot the first person to lay a hand on him. Young Al Doyle and a half - dozen others quickly joined the savior and persuaded the mob to let the accused go, providing he left camp immediately and never returned.

When Doyle died in 1921, he and D.S. Chamberlain, a

Arizona State University Library Photo

A Fourth of July attraction in Flagstaff during 1911 was the Milton Hose Team which defeated Flagstaff and Winslow squads. Al Doyle's two-story brick home is in the background in this view looking west at the north side of Birch St. Miss Bullard, a school teacher, lived in the frame cottage.

prosperous Des Moines, Iowa, businessman, were the last survivors of the two track - laying gangs that met at Promontory, Utah, in 1869.

In 1920, Ernest Lennon of Flagstaff received a letter from Chamberlain, inquiring about Doyle's health. His lifelong hobby was communicating with the men in the two railroad gangs that met in Utah.

When the railroad was completed, Doyle returned to Wyoming where he punched cattle for J.W. Illiff, the "cattle king of the northwest." In 1870, he started south, earning a living by killing buffalo and selling the hides.

Doyle bought an ox team at Las Animas, Colorado, and traveled to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he traded the animals for some burros. He and four companions then rode the 400 miles to Camp Verde, Arizona, and soon Al found his way to the Bradshaw mines near Prescott.

He worked for a time at the War Eagle mine, located between the famed Tiger and Peck ore bodies. When the owners, Judge John Goodwin and Rodney McKinnon, sold out in 1876, he entered the cattle business.

Al married Miss Sarah Allen of Kansas in an 1877 Christmas Day wedding in Prescott. The newlyweds soon set up housekeeping at a Marshall Lake ranch near Lake Mary.

Doyle gradually disposed of his cattle interests, moved to Flagstaff, and for a time worked for a lumber firm while developing a guide service. On Aug. 4, 1888, the *Arizona Champion* of Flagstaff noted: "Al Doyle, superintendent of the Arizona Wood Co., who has been ill several weeks with fever, is again on the streets, although looking quite weak."

Arizona State University Library Photo

Mrs. Al Doyle (Sarah), the first white woman to cross the Grand Canyon shortly after the Bright Angel Trail was completed, visits the Saginaw-Manistee Lumber Co. at Flagstaff in 1912. Mrs. Doyle (left) is accompanied by a friend, Mrs. Bertha Kennedy of Flagstaff. The lumber men are unidentified.

He rebounded quickly, and the guide - service business boomed. Along the way, he became interested in matters of civic concern.

In 1889, arguments flared between Prescott and Flagstaff over plans to split Yavapai County and create a second governmental seat at Flagstaff.

In March 1890, the *Champion* began a series of well - written, humorous articles under the byline, "A Tax Payer of Yavapai County." The author's identity soon surfaced as Al Doyle of Flagstaff.

He accused the Yavapai Board of Supervisors of spending money on roads that only served Prescott and neglecting those leading to Flagstaff and Phoenix.

Doyle also inferred that the county's taxpayers were stuck for paying off the Prescott and Arizona Central Railway bonds. The route extended only 72 miles from Prescott Junction to Prescott.

Next, the "Tax Payer of Yavapai County" pulled out all the stops, charging that the courthouse, built 12 years previously, was a rip-off, since one equally as good could be built for $20,000 — a far cry from the $75,000 tab the taxpayers had to pay.

"Prescott is buying the support of legislators to move the capitol back from Tucson," he charged. "The old bosses of Prescott should follow the example of the Big Colorado Indians by heaping mud on themselves and hiding from the sight of all respectable people who come to build homes if taxes don't starve them out."

Most of the remarks were aimed at John Marion, publisher of the Prescott *Courier*, who fired a few salvos of his own.

"He slides over my articles as though the seat of his pants were patched with bacon rind," Doyle retaliated. "He did not stop to answer a single item referred to in it."

The verbal exchange was great fun and provided ammunition for the battle for Coconino County. Those supporting the change gained strength when Doyle charged that "The Yavapai Board has added another $320,000 to taxpayer indebtedness by issuing more railroad bonds."

He went on to note that the county's total expenditure for railroad, courthouse, and roads in Prescott was $797,345, with only $475 in tax dollars earmarked for the Flagstaff jail.

"Who wouldn't hurrah for county division?" Doyle asked. "The old lady better divide the homestead and send her troublesome children out to fend for themselves."

Marion won a few verbal battles along the way, but Doyle won the war when Coconino County gained legislative approval.

These civic responsibilities were time consuming, but Doyle managed to keep his guide service moving forward at a good pace. In 1893, the Atlantic and Pacific Railway's impressive tourist brochure gave him a boost:

"Mr. A. Doyle of Flagstaff is the owner of the trail to Humphrey's Peak and acts as guide when desired. He provides the necessary equipment including his own services at reasonable cost. Independent arrangements can be made if desired, but in that case, a toll is charged for use of his trail.

"From Flagstaff, the road was recently constructed to one of the peaks," the brochure continued. "This is Mt. Humphrey, whose summit is 12,750 feet above sea level. It is a good mountain road and the distance from Flagstaff is only about ten miles. The trip to the summit and back is easily done in a day."

Doyle's guide service and toll road prospered. He continued to meet people who appreciated his honesty, enthusiasm, and rugged individualism. Some encouraged him to have a fling at politics.

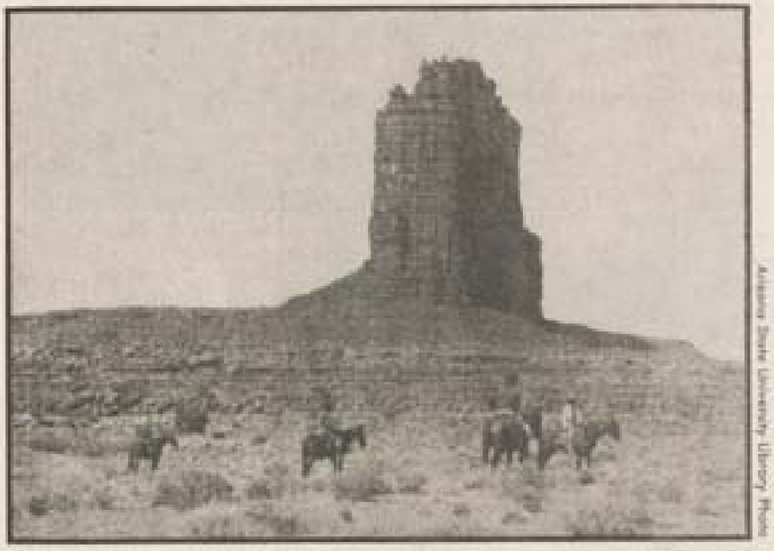
On Thursday, Oct. 1, 1896, the *Coconino Sun* endorsed Doyle for county recorder and boasted "...the Republicans of Coconino County have placed an exceptionally good ticket this year. The nominees are all men of high standing against whom not a bad word can be truthfully said. We confidently feel it will be elected."

Specifically, regarding Al's chances, the paper said: "He has, at all times, taken a lively interest in public affairs and always worked for the advancement of Arizona. He was one of the organizers of the Republican Party in the Territory, and the office of recorder requires the qualifications Mr. Doyle possesses... discretion, good judgment, and genial disposition. In the election of Mr. Doyle to this office, voters of Coconino County will make no mistake."

Well, they did. The *Sun's* boasts were a classic case of misplaced confidence. Democrats ruled the county roost, and in Doyle's race, Thomas Pulliam outpolled him, 651 to 334. On the national scene that election day, another Republican, William McKinley, fared much better.

Al withstood the agony of defeat and continued his interest in local affairs. Meanwhile, in January 1902, he experienced what must have been his most unusual adventure: serving as guide to the first automobile to challenge the Grand Canyon.

The foursome of Oliver Lippincott, Winfield Hogaboom, T.M. Chapman, and Doyle planned to drive a Toledo auto from Flagstaff to Hance's Point in less than four hours. Instead, it took nearly four days, as mechanical breakdowns and lack of



Arizona State University Library Photo

Zane Grey Party (Wetherill, Doyle, Grey, and Paiute guide Nascha Begay) pause at Organ Rock in Monument Valley in 1913. Grey introduced movie producer Jesse Lasky to this scene two years later, and the area became popular as a film locale.

Arizona State University Library Photo

Al Doyle enjoys the rim view from "The Toledo," the first car to reach the Grand Canyon in January 1902.

supplies nearly foiled the journey.

Thousands of Los Angeles *Herald* subscribers read Hogaboom's account of how he and Doyle finally volunteered to leave the stricken party and press on to Berry's Hotel some 18 miles away, and send back a relief expedition.

They walked about a half-mile when Doyle collapsed from stomach cramps caused by drinking gasoline-laced water from the boiler.

"I left him by the lava rocks and pressed on alone," Hogaboom told his readers. Had Zane Grey read that article he likely would have had second thoughts about hiring Doyle as his pathfinder.

Somehow the Toledo made it, and Doyle survived to serve as a member of the Flagstaff Teacher's College board. Governor Kibbey named him to the Normal School post on March 6, 1906, and the twenty-fourth Territorial Legislature quickly confirmed the appointment.

The *Arizona Business Directory* of 1907-08 contained information about Flagstaff and environs. At one point, it gave the Edwardian tourist this advice: "...Take Doyle's Trail to the San Francisco Peaks from which there is an excellent view of the surrounding country for hundreds of miles."

Zane Grey first came to Arizona in the spring of 1908 to meet Charles J. "Buffalo" Jones. There is no record that he encountered Doyle, but it is quite likely that he did. Grey and Jones left Flagstaff on April 20, 1908, to rope lions in the Grand Canyon. These adventures produced a *Field and Stream* serial in 1909 and the classic *Last of the Plainsmen*, Grey's first successful book.

Before experiencing many adventures with Zane Grey, Doyle made another important contribution to Arizona's development in the summer of 1911.

For years, the area north of the Grand Canyon, called "The Arizona Strip," was virtually unknown to those living south of the canyon. Geographically, it was more compatible with Utah and Nevada, and was a part of those states for a time. However, strip residents wanted to be Arizonans, and they finally succeeded in becoming part of the Territory.

Sharlot Hall, writer, poetess and recently appointed Arizona historian, decided to make a fact-finding tour of the area and write a series of articles acquainting Arizonans with their cross-canyon citizens.

She met Doyle when he mined and raised cattle in the Bradshaws, and knew him as a discreet, wise, and genial man. He also knew Arizona better than any other individual.

A single woman and a married man embarking on a three-month sojourn into the wilds could have raised eyebrows among the day's moralists, but since that man was Al Doyle, not an eyelash fluttered. Ms. Hall was in good hands.

After loading their light Studebaker wagon and harnessing two sleek Arabian ponies, the couple left Flagstaff on July 23, 1911, and headed north toward Tuba City and Lee's Ferry, traveling along a dirt road that closely parallels today's U.S. Highway 89.

For three months, these "first tourists" saw all the sights. They greeted Indians at Moenkopi, crossed the Colorado at Lee's Ferry, traveled through House Rock Valley, the Kaibab Plateau, and swung north to Fredonia and such Utah Points as St. George, Kanab, Hurricane, and Leeds.

They met Buffalo Jones and Jim Owens and saw their "cattalo" firsthand. Old Buff and Uncle Jim had brought bison to House Rock Valley, a wide-open expanse of land between the straight-walled Paria Plateau and the rounded eastern Kaibab slopes.

They cross-bred them with domestic cattle, creating the hybrid cattalo. Although several animals were produced, the overall experiment was a commercial failure. Buffalo, now under state control, still roam a range in the southern fringe of House Rock Valley, and in Maricopa County, buffalo-cattle crossbreeding continues today, only now the results are "beefalo."

During this three-month adventure, Ms. Hall's notebooks and cameras were always ready. Later, she told Arizona and the world what the great Kaibab had to offer, and predicted that "...after many years of neglect, Arizonans will discover the Kaibab's wild beauty and grandeur by means of that wonder-worker, the automobile."

Sharlot's vivid prose and classic photos stirred the imagination of prospective tourists. They came in a trickle, then in a steady stream which continues today. Few visitors realize that two of the first tourists to the Arizona strip were Sharlot Hall and Al Doyle. Without Al guiding the way, Sharlot's words and pictures might never have reached the world.

In 1913, the year the Buffalo nickel appeared, author Zane Grey was planning another Arizona adventure, with Al Doyle of Flagstaff as his wilderness guide.

He was intrigued by Nonnezoshe, the Navajo's "rainbow turned to stone" (Rainbow Bridge), discovered in 1909 by Dr. Byron Cummings. The University of Utah archaeologist was led to the site by Indian trader John Wetherill, operator of posts at Oljato (moonlight water), Utah, and Kayenta, Arizona.

Mrs. Wetherill, who knew the Paiute and Navajo languages, was held in such esteem by the Indians that the Navajos "adopted" her into the tribe. Noscha and Noscha (Nasta

Bega) Begay, father and son, told her how they came upon a great stone bridge while searching for horses that had strayed from their hogans in Paiute Canyon, northeast of Navajo Mountain.

Dr. Cummings learned about Nonnezoshe from Wetherill who finally persuaded the Indians to take him there. They hired Noscha Begay as guide in late August 1909, and set out on the dangerous back - country trek.

During this expedition, the archaeologist became the first white man to see Rainbow Bridge, and Wetherill was the first white to pass under its great stone arch.

Zane Grey's part was the second unscientific, nonarchaeological group making the trip. Later in 1913, Wetherill guided the Teddy Roosevelt party to the famous natural site, and after that, he brought the Kolb brothers to it.

Grey and Doyle made three trips to Marsh Pass and Kayenta before convincing Wetherill to lead them to Nonnezoshe.

"The country is wild with canyons spreading in several directions like two open hands," he cautioned. "The terrain is rough and animal forage scarce. It's a hard trip and not for everybody."

But Grey persisted and wore down Wetherill's protests. He soon realized that the journey was every bit as difficult as Weatherill pictured it.

"I began to limp and lag and wondered what on earth would make Wetherill and the Indians tired," Grey admitted. "Finally, I got so that all I could do was drag myself onward with eyes down on the rough ground."

But all the pain and agony were worthwhile. "This thing was glorious. It absolutely silenced me," Grey commented. "I had a strange, mystic perception that this rosy - hued, tremendous arch of stone was a goal I had failed to reach in some former life, but had now found."

Later, the author said that no other guide except Wetherill and his Paiutes knew how to get there. "After Doyle and I came out, we admitted we would not care to try to return over our back trail," he commented. "We doubted if we could find the way. This is the only place I have ever been that I am not sure I could find my way to alone."

Grey was prepared for a tough journey and packed many note pads and pencils. Most observations later appeared in *Wildfire*, regarded by many as one of his best works. It marked his first breakthrough into the coveted "slick" magazine market. He also wrote "Nonnezoshe, the Rainbow Bridge" for the February 1915 issue of *Recreation Magazine*.

This was a spectacular trip in many respects. The travelers crossed Monument Valley, then unfamiliar territory to the white man. Two years later, Grey brought movie producer Jesse Lasky to the valley, and after that it became one of the most photographed areas of the southwest, and remains a favorite of western movie makers.

Shortly after returning to Flagstaff, Grey set out again with Doyle and an entourage on a trip to southern Arizona. Observations gathered here were grist for many of his later novels, particularly *Desert Gold*, which first appeared in serial form in *Popular Magazine*, and *Light of the Western Stars*, published in *Munsey's*.

Grey and Doyle made several other journeys through Arizona's back country during the next five years, but the September 1918 bear-hunting excursion into the Tonto Basin was one of the happiest.

His oldest son, Romer, was nine and old enough, he thought, for bear hunting. It wasn't bear that interested the lad, who found squirrel, deer, and turkey more to his liking. Coincidentally, these animals were regarded as fresh camp food by serious bear hunters.

"My old guide on so many trips across the painted desert is in charge of the outfit," Grey wrote. "He is a wiry old pioneer, hollow-cheeked and bronzed, with blue-grey eyes still keen with fire. He is tireless, willing, and when telling a story always begins '...in the early days.' "

Doyle's son, Lee, who cared for the horses, was a typical westerner of many occupations: cowboy, rancher, rider, cattleman. He was a small fellow — wiry, quick, tough, and a carbon copy of his father. It is interesting to note that Lee was later location manager, guide, and consultant to many movie companies working northern Arizona locales in the 1920s and 1930s. He also owned the fabulous "Rex, King of the Wild Horses," and Rex's many successors, all familiar to western movie fans a generation ago.

On that 1918 bear hunt, Doyle led the party to the Tonto Basin via the famed Natural Bridge which Grey described as "not magnificent like the grand Nonnezoshe, but strikingly beautiful."

He noted that "the right side was slippery and wet, and all the rocks were thickly encrusted with lime salt. Doyle told us that any object left under the ceaseless drip, drip, drip of the lime water would soon become encrusted and heavy as stone."

Doyle also pointed out the high cave where Indians once lived, and told of Apaches being driven into the highest level from which they never escaped.

Joe Isbel, a prize - winning rider at most southwestern rodeos, hired on as cook. Although efficient, he failed to inspire Grey with confidence. As the days passed, supplies mysteriously vanished.

Doyle, although suspicious of Isbel, advised Grey not to take him to task — at least, not yet. Grey fretted, but heeded his guide's advice.

A few days later, Grey returned from a hunt and found Isbel eating a lavish meal with three rough - appearing men as guests. He fired him on the spot. Isbel immediately started packing all the supplies he could carry, claiming it was the "western way for the cook to have the right to all the chuck he wants."

Doyle, of course, had to take over the cook's duties, and with short rations for a time. Grey noted: "We gained rather than lost, by the change."

Amazingly, Doyle did it all, even though at the time of the 1918 bear hunt he was a month shy of 69 years. At times, the veteran outdoorsman's age concerned Grey. During one particularly arduous phase of the journey through rocks and pine thickets, he paused and asked his guide if he was all right.

"Fit as a fiddle," Doyle replied. "This is child's play to what we teamsters had in the early days."

Grey admitted that Doyle, despite his age, was a remarkable example to the younger men, including himself.

Doyle also possessed a keen sense of direction and recall — valuable assets to any wilderness guide. Once, during the 1918 bear hunt, the party reached a junction that led to an old blazed road. Doyle had a vague knowledge of it.

"It must lead to Jones' ranch," he said. "Anyways, we got to take it, even it it don't."

They moved at a pace of about four miles an hour and at sunset emerged on the brow of a steep, barren - looking canyon containing some log-cabin ruins. When Doyle saw the broken-down structures, he immediately yelled: "This is it, boys. It's Jones' ranch all right. I've been

Arizona State University Library Photo

Zane Grey, John Wetherill, and Al Doyle (left to right) view Indian cliff ruins in Segi Canyon en route to Nonnezoshe (Rainbow Bridge) in 1913.

here before. We're only three miles from Long Valley and the main road."

The party huddled around the campfire and waited on Doyle's cooking. The old guide talked while he worked. He said he knew Jones in the early days and told how the pioneer rancher rode into the canyon on a prairie schooner 30 years ago. He had a wife, gun, ax, some chuck, a few horses, cattle, but little else.

"He built that cabin over there, raised some stock, and did some freighting," Doyle recalled. "In 25 years, he had three fine sons, a daughter, and a fortune in cattle. Then he sold his stock and left to give his family civilization's advantages."

Grey listened intently as his old guide told how the oldest Jones boy, Abe, was killed at the Argonne. The other brothers were wounded and still overseas.

"I met a man not long ago who had seen Jones recently," Doyle sighed. "He said the old fellow and his missus would like to be back home. And home to them means right here ... Jones' ranch."

This was a typical Doyle story similar to hundreds he related to Grey, who immediately sensed a theme for a novel. The author moved away from the campfire, walked toward the shambles of the one-room log cabin, and alone with his thoughts, leaned against the weathered doorway.

"In one clear, divining flash, I saw the life of the lad and yearned to tell the simplicity, ruggedness, and glory of his story," he wrote later. "The moan of the wind in the pines was a requiem for the boy who once romped under them."

The 1918 hunt had barely ended before Grey began planning a 1919 excursion. This time, he had a surprise for Doyle and the others. His Japanese cook, Takahashi, met him in Flagstaff.

"I had discovered a treasure in Takahashi, but was careful to conceal my conviction from R.C., the Doyles, and Nielsen," he observed. "They were glad to see him with us, but manifestly did not expect wonders."

Their reasoning was sound. Takahashi rode a little buckskin Navajo mustang. He was so short that the stirrups could not be fixed so his feet could reach them. When he used any support at all, he stuck his feet through the straps above the stirrups. Doyle had visions of picking the Oriental up every mile or two. Somehow, he stayed in the saddle, and his cooking became a hit with the crew.

One day during this trip, a strange black and gray pigeon - sized bird caught Grey's attention. At first he though it was injured, but in reality the bird was tame and friendly. He stayed quite close for some time before flying away.

That evening, another bird of the same species, equally as tame, visited the camp. Grey asked Doyle about it.

"It's a rare bird ... a Clark Crow ... named after the fella in the Lewis and Clark Expedition," the old guide remarked. "First one I've seen in thirty years." Since Doyle spent so much time in the open, this observation seemed quite significant to Grey.

During the 1919 hunt, unsettled weather portended an early winter. The wilderness, as if inspired, assumed autumnal colors and the forest became an enchanted region of quaking aspens, purple spruces, dark green pines, golden maples, and blazes of vermilion, cerise, scarlet, magenta, and rose. Higher up, the white aspens were already bare, and oak leaves rustled at the foot of the pines.

Nature's Indian summer of melancholy, mystery, and silence hummed an early requiem for a favorite son, Al Doyle, now in the late autumn of his rich life. Zane Grey would enjoy other hunts, but without the companionship of his old guide.

The *Coconino Sun*, in reporting Doyle's death, praised him as being one of the most reliable guides in the southwest.

"Among his more notable charges on numerous excursions into the wilds were Jimmie Swinnerton, the artist, and Zane Grey, the author.

"The latter derived much of the material for his famous southwestern novels from Mr. Doyle. During the author's visit here last week, after returning from a bear hunt in the Tonto Basin country where his guide was Lee Doyle, son of Allan, Mr. Grey spent many hours talking over past expeditions with his old wilderness companion."

The folks privileged to know Al offered an impressive farewell. "There was a great profusion of beautiful flowers on the casket," the Flagstaff newspaper reported. "And the procession to the grave was four blocks long."

Al Doyle, Arizona's forgotten guide, is gone. But his stories of sudden death, terrible lust, and alluring gold ... unforgettable stories that fired Zane Grey's imagination ... abide with us.

And that is his legacy to the American west. ● **RW**