

Dr. J. Harvey Butchart
15225 Ridgeview Road
Sun City, Arizona 85351

November 22, 1977

Dear Harvey:

It was surely a treat to have opportunity for a good visit with you, and also to meet your good wife. After hearing about your exploits for so many years, it was a joy actually to talk with you.

I hope that the rest of your trip worked out excellently in every way, and that you are now safely back in Sun City.

Your remarks about Forster Canyon and Fossil Bay interested me greatly. In 1941 I dropped down from the end of the Thumb to the plateau and followed it to the west and south until I came to a place above Supai. There it was easy to get lost in a maze of low hills and mounds so I decided to go straight down the cliff. Before I began the trip I had made very careful inquiries from Burt Lauzon who had already made this trip (with Ed McKee if I remember correctly), as to where water holes would be found. I found at least twice as many as I had been told about (though at some the water had a rather bad taste--gypsum?). Since I felt frustrated on much of the trip, because it was only occasionally that I could get a direct view into the main Canyon or into Cataract Canyon, I found myself wishing I were on the other side of the Thumb.

Two years later, in 1943, I set out to fulfill this desire. I did not know that there had been a rather unusual drought in the region for the previous six weeks, causing many water holes to dry up, and I overlooked the fact that the strata of the Thumb slope from east to west, so that it would be reasonable to expect to find more water holes on the western side. After filling my two two-quart canteens with water at the spring below Apache Point I headed eastward and crossed Forster Canyon. Then I found it necessary to look intensively for water, but found none, and soon the second canteen was empty. I believe I described to you what I did during the next three and a half days. I put everything I could spare into a small knapsack and hung it in a tree. Before the sun came up over the ridge the first morning I got under the shade of a tree, not far below a place where part of the Coconino had been broken into a pile of boulders. As soon as the sun went beyond the other ridge I made it through the Coconino without difficulty but was stopped at its top by the small Toroweap stratum which, though not very high, was entirely vertical. Here there was a small flat place about 25 feet wide, on both sides of which the Toroweap came right to the edge of the Coconino. In the middle of it there was a considerable overhang making a cave about ten feet wide and about fifteen feet high. North of the cave I found a vertical crack in the Toroweap wide enough for toe and knee holds, but it became dark before I could try to climb it. The next morning I managed to climb up the crack to the top of the Toroweap, then returned and fastened half of what remained of my pack to a small rope, climbed again to the top of the Toroweap and pulled the bundle up to the top, and went down for the rest. Just then the sun came over the ridge and hit me squarely, making it necessary to spend the rest of the day in the shade of the cave, since I was already pretty well dehydrated. That evening I climbed up