

# House Boating on Lake Powell

(Why didn't we do that???)

by Larry Kline

Part 2 of 2



First Camp Near Lake Canyon



The TravelSmith Paddler and Author

After the harrowing time at the Escalante Arm on Day 3 with the wind in our face, the trip took on its second calm interlude. The first 2 days had been the calm before the Escalante storm. We spent the 3rd night at the mouth of the Escalante Arm, and paddled on towards The Rincon the next morning. I took a short 2 mile detour into Browns Canyon and caught up with the others at our Camp 4 on the east side of The Rincon - a massive butte surrounded by a canyon which once had been an old river meander. I explored up the canyon and discovered an old mining or oil and gas exploration road that lead up and over the south rim of the canyon. Maybe we could have driven here!!!! A petrified forest was another mile too far for my leisurely stroll. Maybe next time.

On Day 5 we began our explora-

tion of Iceberg Canyon. It has an intriguing series of side canyons. Our goal was to find a high waterfall noted in the guidebook. The canyon looked serpentine as we found our way to its head. Every twist continued to swallow us up as the waterway constantly opened up. At the canyon end, a large flotilla consisting of 2 houseboats, several canoes, and foot-propelled paddleboats greeted us. We took out just upstream and headed out for the waterfall. On the way we passed 2 abandoned Danforth anchors that were in excellent condition and are used by houseboats. I mentioned to the flotilla that if they salvaged them they could well pay for part of their trip. We certainly could not carry them out on our kayaks. It was a one-mile hike up the canyon thru a variety of hot hillsides, Cottonwood groves and past a small shady side pool that brought us

to within 100 yards of the now dry waterfall. We backtracked and cooled ourselves by the shady pool. Copious hatfuls of water on the head replenished the equilibrium lost to the heat.

On the 3-mile paddle out I lagged behind, exploring the several side canyons. Soon I realized I was in a maze. None of the canyons looked to be the obvious exit to the main channel of Lake Powell. All of a sudden I saw a yellow kayak! "Why was Froehler here? He left long ago." Turns out it was a woman from a group of six paddlers. One asked if I was self-supported. I said no, thinking they meant whether I was alone. Later Howard pointed out that I was, in fact, NOT self-supported because Paul had the boom box!!! How intertwined are our lives! Turns out they were from Moab and on a houseboat

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continued

exploring the lake for the first time. No wonder they asked whether I was self-supported. I saw their houseboat at a beach near the mouth of the canyon as I paddled out. Another 3 miles of paddling and I found the others setting up camp on Perky Bar near the mouth of Slick Rock Canyon where we had camped the first night. Here we found another stack of golf balls to add to our collection. Seems the lake is a great driving range for idle house boater's bored with the silence and scenery. Next morning Paul told us of his encounter with a "critter". Seems something "huge" was crawling on him in the night. He awoke, looked thru his bag and promptly spilled his water bottle into his bag!! Come to find out it was just a cricket!!!

Day 6, the next to last, our plan was for Howard, Paul E and myself to explore Annie's Canyon while the others paddled up lake to reconnoiter the interior of Lake Canyon as a possible camp site. If they found nothing they would wait for us. Turns out, after paddling up Lake Canyon they decided to head for Halls Crossing and home. They left word with a power boater who came by after we had explored Annie's and told us they had left. Lucky

for them they did head out early because the wind we experienced that last night began to blow as they touched down at Halls Crossing about 4 pm. It was chaos on the ramp. 3-foot waves and motor boaters all over the place.

Our side trip into Annie's Canyon was interesting. We encountered a huge overhanging alcove at the end of one side channel. In another side channel I poked my boat completely inside another alcove that was just head high but 25 feet back. Even have a photo to document it. After Annie's we found a lunch stop. As we began paddling again, Paul heard a sharp crack and turned his head to see a 30-40 foot slab of Navajo sandstone fall down the far canyon wall. It kicked up a large dust cloud. Howard and I just saw the fresh rock face where the slab had once rested. It was quite the geologic moment! Made one a bit more cautious when approaching overhangs along the lake walls. We did see the impressive evidence of several post-Glen Canyon Dam rock falls and slumps since 1983 when the lake filled to its maximum for the one and only time.



**LaGorce Arch**

And left its infamous white, bathtub stain as a date marker. Seems the Bureau of Rec was using 8x4 plywood sheets (!! ) to keep the water from overtopping the dam that year!!! That is another story in itself. One exceptional rock fall at Perky Bar was a ¼ mile long 300 foot high slab that had dropped into the lake.

And so ended our trip. It was a great adventure for all of us.

Would we go back? Absolutely!! But if Carole wanted to come along, I'm sure the houseboat option would prevail. It even has its appeal for "hardcore" paddlers. More time to explore side canyons rather than being "in transit" to and from Escalante Arm for 4 days.