

LETTER FROM EVERETT RUESS TO HIS BROTHER, WALDO, NOVEMBER 1934

I have been thinking more and more that I shall always be a lone wanderer of the wilderness. God, how the trail lures me. You cannot comprehend its resistless fascination for me. After all, the lone trail is the best...I'll never stop wandering. And when the time comes to die, I'll find the wildest, loneliest, most desolate spot there is.

The beauty of this country is becoming part of me. I feel more detached from life and somehow gentler... I have some good friends here, but no one who really understands why I am here or what I do. I don't know of anyone, though, who would have more than a partial understanding; I have gone too far alone. I have always been unsatisfied with life as most people live it. Always, I want to live more intensely and richly.

In my wanderings this year I have taken more chances and had more wild adventures than ever before. And what a magnificent country I have seen--wild, tremendous wasteland stretches, lost mesas, blue mountains rearing upward from vermilion sands of the desert, canyons five feet wide at the bottom and hundreds of feet deep, cloudburst roaring down unnamed canyons, and hundreds of houses of the cliff dwellers, abandoned a thousand years ago.

I have had a few narrow escapes from rattlers and crumbling cliffs. The last misadventure occurred when Chocolatero my burro stirred up some wild bees. A few more stings might have been too much for me. I was three or four days getting my eyes open and recovering the use of my hands.

As to when I shall visit civilization, it will not be soon, I think. I have not tired of the wilderness; rather I enjoy its beauty and the vagrant life I lead, more keenly all the time. I prefer the saddle to the streetcar and the star-sprinkled sky to a roof, the obscure and difficult trail, leading into the unknown, to any paved highway, and the deep peace of the wild to the discontent bred by cities. Do you blame me then for staying here, where I feel that I belong and am one with the world around me? It is true that I miss intelligent companionship, but there are so few with whom I can share the things that mean so much to me that I have learned to contain myself. It is enough that I am surrounded with beauty....

Even from your scant description, I know that I could not bear the routine and humdrum of the life that you are forced to lead. I don't think I could ever settle down. I have known too much of the depths of life already, and I would prefer anything to an anticlimax.

Letter received from Everett Ruess, to his brother, Waldo, November 11, 1934

Unfortunately this was the last letter Waldo ever received from his brother. Everett vanished shortly after this letter in Utah in the area we know today as Glen Canyon.

Submitted by Darrell