

For Immediate Release (November 10, 2014)

Beehive Archive

Welcome to the Beehive Archive—your weekly bite-sized look at some of the most pivotal—and peculiar—events in Utah history. With all of the history and none of the dust, the Beehive Archive is a fun way to catch up on Utah’s past. Beehive Archive is a production of the Utah Humanities Council, provided to local papers as a weekly feature article focusing on Utah history topics drawn from our award-winning radio series, which can be heard each week on [KCPW](#) and [Utah Public Radio](#).

Vagabond Artist Everett Ruess

The wandering ways of a young artist and writer who mysteriously disappeared in 1934 into southern Utah’s rugged canyon country.

Everett Ruess was twenty years old when he vanished into the canyons of southern Utah, never to be seen again. Born in Los Angeles to bohemian parents, Ruess developed early as a writer and artist. Supported by his family, Ruess left home to wander the American West, to gain experience on the road and feed his creativity.

Ruess took his first solo roadtrip at sixteen, hitchhiking to northern California where he camped by the ocean, then to Yosemite, before returning to Los Angeles to finish high school. Then he took off again – this time to Monument Valley in southern Utah. Over the next few years, Ruess traveled alone, using packhorses and burros, and traded his art to help pay his way. He traveled through Zion Canyon and northern Arizona, back to the Sierra Nevadas, and around the Superstition Mountains. He even lived in San Francisco, where he spent time with now-famous artists Dorothea Lange, Ansel Adams, and Maynard Dixon. Although he went home occasionally, Ruess loved the wilderness and returned again and again to the desert southwest.

Ruess was last seen in November 1934 in Escalante, Utah, before heading into nearby canyons. Some believe he was murdered by rustlers, or committed suicide, or died of dehydration. Others maintain that he went to live on the Navajo Reservation or in Mexico.

In the last letter sent to his brother, dated just before his disappearance, Ruess wrote: *“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 street car 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...”*

The fate of Everett Ruess remains a riddle, but his writing and artwork – these remnants of his journeys – now provide inspiration to thousands.

Beehive Archive is a production of the Utah Humanities Council. Sources consulted in the creation of the Beehive Archive and past episodes may be found at www.utahhumanities.org/BeehiveArchive.htm. © Utah Humanities Council 2014.

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