

California Group Sets Up Tent Camp In Spring Canyon Near Kanarraville

A group of 23 people from throughout various parts of California and representing six families settled in Tuesday afternoon in what is virtually a tent city which they have erected in a canyon just two and one-half miles southeast of Kanarraville in what is known as Spring Canyon.

The group, who drew attention this week through an investigation conducted by Iron County Sheriff Otto Fife, have been located at the isolated spot since January 9.

No roads lead to the camp which they have erected on government owned property, and it is necessary to walk about three-quarters of a mile to reach the area.

The camp is almost hidden, but well located on a side hill among a stand of thick Cedar trees. A series of about seven or eight individual tents are formed in a circle around a larger and central tent which serves as a central meeting place and where the group gathers for eating, discussions and other activities.

Also located in the center of the tents is a good supply of firewood and other general supplies for use by all camp members.

Tuesday afternoon a light snow had fallen throughout southern Utah and at the campsite about two inches of snow was on the ground. For some members of the party it was the first time they had seen snow, for others they have apparently lived in a cold climate but had not had much experience in snow itself.

Many rumors have been spread about the group and what has

brought them here and prompted them to set up a camp in such an out-of-the-way place and away from the cities and towns.

A spokesman for the group indicated that "we just want to find an old fashioned state, we want to find a place where our children can walk down the streets free from a threat of being attacked or victimized."

When asked if they represented any specific religious organization the reply was an emphatic "NO". As a matter of fact the six families represent several different religious backgrounds. They did state however, that various religions had not taught their children what they believed to be the fundamental concepts and in most instances they had left their churches.

It was further indicated that one of the reasons why they had

come into this particular area was because of the "Mormon" influence. They had studied Mormonism and had come to Utah and Idaho seeking relief from the congestion of California.

"We are looking for peace of mind—a place where we will not be caught up in the whirlwind—where we can keep our children," they said, "I was going to lose my children," one woman said, "I had to do something to keep them."

Of the six families represented, two young couples and their children are included. Youngest member of the group is a one and one-half year old child.

This, according to their story, was not a spur of the moment thing. It has been in the planning, they said, for about six years.

They explained that at one

time or another all lived in the same community and became acquainted. The families eventually spread throughout California and, as one woman put it "we had not even corresponded in over two years, and when we did, we found that all of us had been thinking about the same thing—getting away from it all."

That's apparently when the planning began and it continued over a six year period.

The families left their respective homes in California separately. Some left on January 4 others as late as the 6th, with the arrangement that all would meet in Kanab, which they did.

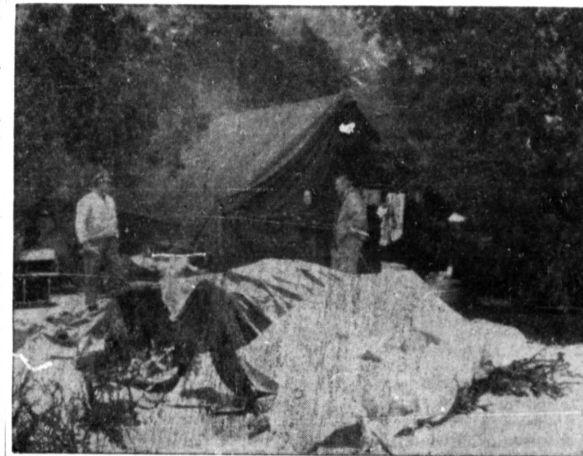
From Kanab, where they stirred up some interest, they traveled through Zion National Park stopped at Springdale for a meal then on to Kanarraville.

How long they will stay—they could not and would not say. Many of their vehicles including at least four touring cars and three pickups are strung out along the creek bed in the canyon from the mouth of the canyon to the campsite with one pickup mired in the creekbed midway in the canyon.

The party seems to be outfitted extremely well. Most of the tents appear to be new. Each tent has an individual heating unit. They are using wood from the terrain for fuel in addition to a number of alcohol stoves with a good supply of alcohol to burn.

They indicated that they had purchased upwards of \$300 in grocery items in the area in addition to bringing with them 1000 pounds of beans 1000 pounds of rice and various other stable items.

They further indicated, and have been so instructed by Sheriff Fife, that they plan to enter their children in school to conform with state laws and that they intend to meet all requirements of the law.



CENTRAL CAMP AREA. Two members of the group who have located near Kanarraville are shown here near the central tent where food is prepared and the group assembles for various reasons. In the foreground is a wood pile protected from the storm by plastic coverings.



DUGOUT TENT. This is one of the individual tents at the campsite. Smoke from the stove is shown coming from the chimney in back. In the left background is another of the tents, nearly hidden in the heavy cedars.