

# A Letter From Bert Loper to Elwyn Blake

Edited by John Weisheit

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Salt Lake City, Utah,  
August 27, 1940

Mr. Elwyn Blake  
Durango, Colorado

Dear Elwyn:

I will try to start the answer to your last letter.

I was born in Bowling Green, Pike County, Missouri, July, 31, 1869, in a house on the outskirts of the town and, as I remember, the house was painted red and had four rooms. I remember that we had a cistern at the back of the house (every one had to depend on rain water caught from the roof of the houses and stored in cisterns). I had an uncle named Winnie; he had a span of mules and the barn was at the back of the lot. There was a cistern at the barn and my brother and I nearly filled the well. We had a board fence around the house woodpile on the north side of the house. There was an old Negro church down below the place, and if I remember right, my brother and I broke out some of the glass; my brother is 8 months older than I.

I do not remember my father, for he and my mother parted when I was two years old, and he went to Texas. I was always taught that he was dead and that is the story that I have always told. He died about 1895 in Whitesboro Texas and is buried there. I still tell that both my parents died when I was three years old; that being the time my mother died and it was from there on that I was an orphan in every respect.

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I said that the place was surrounded by a board fence and there was a board nailed on top of one of the posts in a flat position. I remember there was a boy that walked on top of the fence and I thought that if I ever got big enough to do that, that would be as far as I could go. I remember that I had an old chair that I drug around and called it my wagon. One time my brother and I were playing with the old chair when a little Negro boy came and pushed my brother out of his way and proceeded to take his place. Then I, who was in front pulling, left my place and put the child out, and went and got my brother by the hand and led him back to his place.

My uncle Winnie was a small man with a very small foot, and I remember that I pulled his boot on over my shoe, and the folks made me believe that I would never get the boot off. I also remember the old ash hopper out in the back yard, and how my grandmother kept me herded away from it when she was making lye. My oldest uncle was a wagon maker, and in due time he moved to Curryville, 8 miles west of Bowling Green, and opened a wagon shop at that place; I must have been about four years old when he moved to that place. I lived there until my grandmother died of tuberculosis, but prior to her death, this uncle that was a wagon maker, sold out and moved to Durango, Colorado. For a number of years he was a bridge carpenter for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. In the meantime he went out to Montezuma Valley, and located a ranch. In order for him to hold his job on the railroad he sent for me to come out and improve the ranch. That is how I happened to come West, but there is lots to come before this and so I will back up to Missouri again.

When our home was broken-up my brother was taken to be raised by my mothers sister and my grandmother took me; that separated my brother and I. We were never like other brothers, but we did manage to visit about twice each a year. My brother was raised in the country on a farm, and I was kept in town, and it so happened that I was always puny, spindly and sickly. As a rule I never got schooling except in Winter and just how I managed to dodge tuberculosis is more than I can understand, for most of my mothers folks passed on with that dreaded disease. The last Winter of my grandmothers life I slept in the same bed with her in a little room with a hot fire in it with every window shut tight. She passed on the 17th of March, and being poor people, that caused the breaking-up of our home. It was a shift for me, but before I go on, I will try to describe my life and surroundings in Curryville.

As I said before I was a very puny kid, and so it is natural that I got cuffed-around plenty. In the Winter time I was always sick, but in the Summer I got along better, and my mania was swimming. My grandmother, being of the old school where it was "spare the rod to spoil the child", gave me whippings for that one thing alone many-a-time. I would start out with the knowledge that I was going to get whipped, but I always figured that it was worth it. I would go swimming, and sometimes it would be two beatings a day for me. I remember one time that I thought I would miss one of them, so I went in the morning and stayed all day, and when I went home I was so weak from hunger that it was some task to get back home, and by staying in all day my back was in a horrible condition, and I remember I had 14 boils break out on my back. It was then that grandma got even with me by squeezing those boils plenty hard.

About three miles north of Curryville there was a creek; especially on Sundays it seems as though I always wanted to do the very things that I should not have done, and many times on a Sunday when I was all cleaned-up and ready for church, I would get in with a bunch of boys, and to the creek we would go. As a rule we would make a day of it, and when Spring came it was the joy of my life to get out doing such things. It is still beyond me to understand, but I remember that it would be in the early Spring and that the May apples would be ripe, and we would eat May apples all day. It was wonderful to me to get out; the creek was such a wonderful place with its clear pools and nice swimming holes, with the little fishes and the old craw fish. It was something that I could not see every day and there was no harm, but I got my beatings just the same. I did most of my swimming on farms that had from one-to-several ponds holding water, but when I could get away to the creek it would be one grand time for me.

I think that about all the toys I ever had was a sled and a two-wheel cart, both made by my wagon-maker uncle, but they were about the best sled and cart in town. We had an old milk cow that we named Lucy, and it was on Lucy that I learned to milk, which later stood me in good stead. When I was about nine years old I would get a job riding the rake horse during my hay time and would get 50¢ per day. I must have been about 11 years old when I got a job bearing brick, and that was about the toughest job a kid could have for it seemed that my back would break; that was about all the work I would do during the Summer. There were no street cars at that time in that place and perhaps not now.

I will try to describe the outfit that raised by brother. My mother's sister was married to a man by the name of Allen-Johnson, and a bigger brute never lived. He did not whip, he just beat, and would use his fist or any thing that he happened to have. As a rule grandma and I would make a visit to the farm and my uncle would put me to work uncovering corn; to uncover corn means that I would follow after him when he was cultivating, and all of the corn that got covered up I would have to stop and uncover it. Because I could not keep up with him I would get beaten, and as I said before, I was a very puny kid. My brother was just the opposite being so strong with his chest like a wrestler. During the Winter sometimes my brother would come to our place for a short visit, and that would be all that we two could be together each year. Of course my brother and I would have fights for he was so strong, and even in our play he would be so rough, and he would hurt me, and then I would try to lick him, which I could never do.

My schooling was received in an old red brick school house, and the schools of that day were different from the schools of today, for a kid could be in the 5th reader and still be doing addition and things like that. As I said before, I would lose about half of my schooling each Winter, but the most I did get was after I was put-out in the world for I went two Winters (about 5 months each), and that was the extent of my schooling.

I was in the 5th reader when I was 10-years old, and it always seemed to be easy for me to do a good job of reading, but mathematics and grammar kept me back, and I find, as I go through life, that that is what I need the most. I find that I have covered most of the time before my grandmother died so I will try to go on to the time after her death.

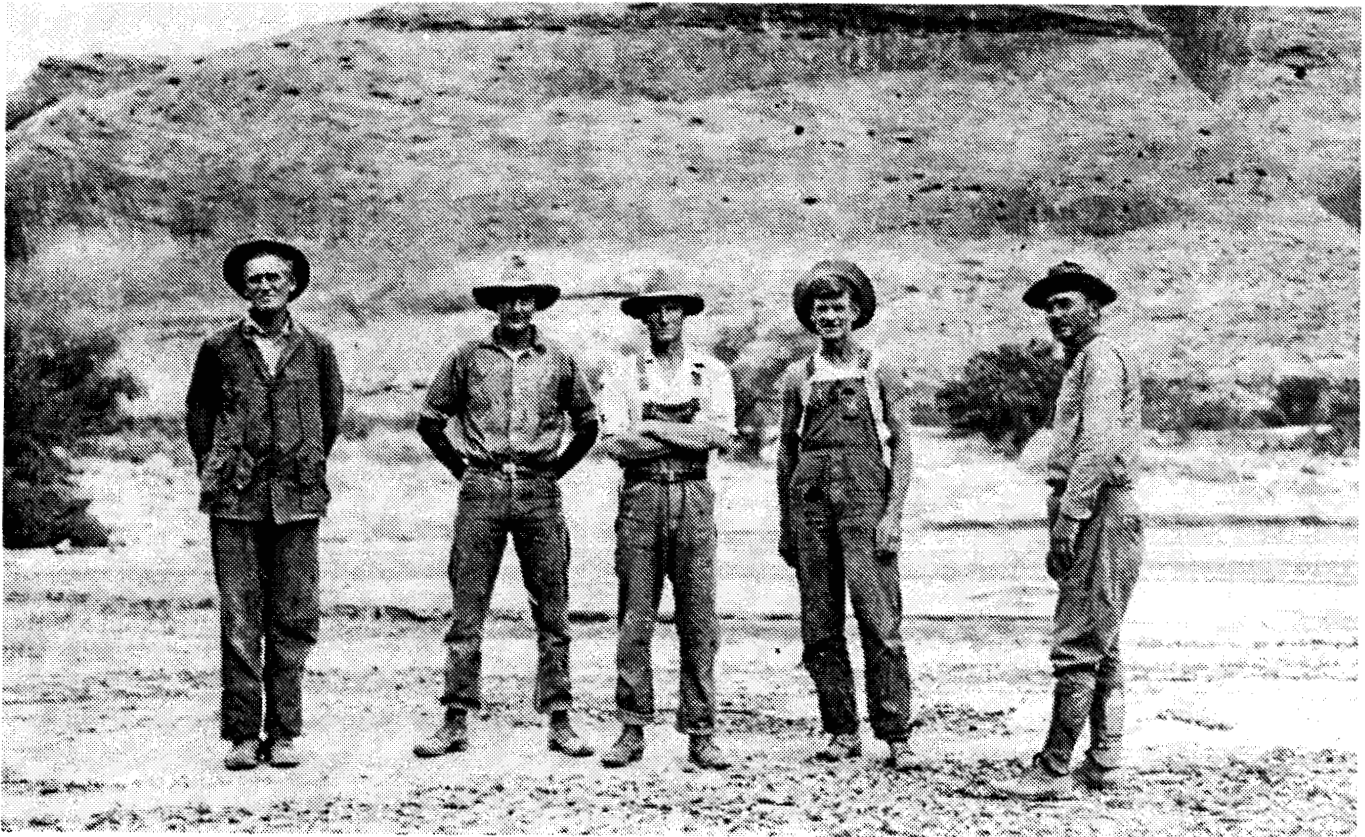
...I was housed up in the air-tight room with my grandmother the last Winter of her life; with her one lung gone and the other on its way when she died on the 17th of March 1881(?). So that put me with that brute, uncle Johnson, ...

As I said before, I was housed up in the air-tight room with my grandmother the last Winter of her life; with her one lung gone and the other on its way when she died on the 17th of March 1881(?). So that put me with that brute, uncle Johnson, that was hired-out on a farm for the Summer. In the Fall I went with Johnson, and that put my brother and I together; so it did not take long for us to plan it all out. In the Fall, or corn-cutting time, we departed and were gone for one and a half years; then returned, but not to the one that had mistreated my brother and I so. Of course we had to come along, and we piled into a car loaded with railroad rails, and we rode to what was known as Clarke Junction; that is where the Wabash crossed the Chicago and Alton. We begged something to eat there—that is my brother did the begging for that was out of my line. We finally reached Higbee, the place where the Chicago, Alton and the M.K.&T. cross. We took the M.K.&T. for that road went to Texas, and that was where the cowboys were located, and that was our destination. In due time we reached the Missouri River and we started to walk over to the railroad bridge, and after walking half-way we were told to go back for no one could cross the bridge. We went back and tried to cross on the ferry, but we had no money so we were balked. After awhile a mover wagon came along and took us over, and by that time it was nearly evening, and with nothing to eat all day we were getting rather hungry, so we spied a big house with big barns on the hill, and asked for something to eat, and they took us in and kept us all night. It so happened that the place was a diary and, as I said before, I had learned to milk on old Lucy so the folks decided that I could stay, and they sent my Brother up-river 50 miles to the man's brother's place at Miami, Saline County, Missouri. I was not long in becoming the best milker of the diary, and the agreement was that I was to go to school during the Winter, but that part of the agreement was not carried out so I only got my board for my work for the Winter and all the next Summer too, and in the Fall the man, whose name was Flourney Snelling, sold out his diary and moved to Clinton, Missouri. I went with him and I got about four months schooling, and then returned to Boonville, to the diary, and went to work for the new owner by the name of Sebe Hazel, and I believe I got \$8 per month, and it was not long until my brother quit his job up the river, came down, and went to work for the diary.

In due time my brother and I got in a fight and both of us got fired. It was then that we started on our way home again, and after some hungry days we reached home, but on our way we got in a box car loaded with wheat and I was greatly concerned that my brother would be heard by the brakeman, and that we would be fired out, but the train went past Curryville and we had an eight mile walk back to Curryville,

and it so happened that we reached our destination just at noon, and the table was all set and did we fill up. My brother was something of a man by now, and he got a job with the fencing gang on the railroad, and I got a home with a widow by the name of Bettie Rose, and if a growing boy ever fell into a snap, it was me, for I went from a puny kid into a man in very short notice. I went from about 80 pounds to 145 in two years, and I really believe that Mrs. Rose got the enjoyment of her life watching me eat, and about all I wanted to do was to eat and sleep, for it was then that I began to come in to my own, and I got the schooling of my life during that time, and I will try to describe the school.

thing, and we sure lived up to the reputation, and we would never have time to go to the spring for water during recess, but would be ripe. I don't suppose I would eat wild grapes now, but they were sure some delicacy at that time. I had to walk one and a half miles to school, but that was easy for me, but I remember one time that another boy and I had a sling shot (one like David killed Goliath with), and we got to throwing at an old snag and we would not quit until we had hit that snag, and we managed to reach the school at recess time. But I mentioned that it was such a treat for me to get out in the woods, and along the creek, and here I was living right where it was such a paradise to me, and I think that there was never a boy that enjoyed the trees, birds and flowers more than I did, but in all



**The 1921 U.S.G.S. San Juan River Survey. Left to right: Heber Christensen, Hugh Hyde, Elwyn Blake, Bert Loper, and Kelly Trimble. Courtesy of the Christensen Collection, Dan O'Laurie Canyon Country Museum, Moab, Utah.**

It was a country school, and was equipped with common old benches, no desks, and the stove was a big box stove, and would take a stitch of cord wood, and the stove also had a big drum above it, and it made a nice place to write with our slate pencils, and we wrote most everything; it was purely a back woods school, and the wood was oak and hickory, and when our class was over us bigger boys would have to go out and chop wood, but of course we would rather do that than be in school studying, and the school was situated in heavy hardwood timber, and in the Fall there would be lots of nuts, and both red and black haws, and it is a fact that a boy will and can eat any

that time that I lived with the Widow Rose I was getting letters from my uncle in Durango, and in due time he sent for me to come out to Colorado, and stay on the ranch that he had located in the Montezuma Valley. So on the 8th day of June, 1885, I reached Durango, and on the 17th of June, I reached the Montezuma Valley and the ranch.

The parting of my mother and father, my father had been married before and had three daughters older than my mother, so you can see that they were not mated, and there was lots of trouble caused by the three daughters. So it ended as it had to end. There is another wrong that I have never forgotten and that was the fact that my grandmother took out an insurance policy

**THOUGHTS THAT COME TO ME  
IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT**  
(of men that have traveled with me on my many trips)

An Unpublished Manuscript  
by Bert Loper

Transcribed by Rosalyn Jirge  
Edited by John Weisheit

Courtesy of the Marston Collection  
Huntington Library, San Marino, California

for \$1500, and at that time there were three living children of hers, two uncles, and one aunt, but it has always seemed that my brother and I should have been remembered. We were thrown-out in the world without a cent and no place to live, and the three children of hers were all grown and doing for themselves.

My brother and I had to hobo from place-to-place, so I still think that we were mistreated along that line.

Now comes the uncle in Durango; when my grandmother died she left me in the care of that uncle, and all he did for me was to put me with that brute of an uncle, and there was no one that knew him better than the uncle in Durango. But I was off his hands so perhaps his mind was made easy on that score until he got his ranch. He became solicitous once again for my welfare; he sent for me and told me to fence that quarter-section and grub the sage brush. In the course of time I did that very thing, and in less than a week after the job was finished he told me it was time for me to shift for myself. He gave me two old blankets, an old comfort, and told me to beat it.

I landed in a ditch camp, and it was just about the toughest place in the world. I was surrounded by about the most undesirable bunch of men that a kid ever bumped up against. Instead of trying to get me some schooling I got the boot, so you see, after a half-century I still think I was not given an even chance.

There is one thing that I wish to impress on your mind and that is: with all these hardships that I have went through, this is just about the very best world I ever lived in. You know that we live our lives in cycles and there was a time that I felt sorry for myself. I would lament the fate that made me drive an old freight team in the San Juan Mountains with about 12 to 15 feet of snow under us, and we would get a mule down and then would have to work to get him back on the road. By that time our clothes would be wet, and sometimes we would be until 10 o'clock in getting our clothes frozen stiff. Then I traded and went in the mines, and I still think that I have breathed enough gas, powder smoke and bad air to have killed a horse. But the greatest hardship was when I dragged that boat from Lee's Ferry to Hite (162 Miles), and wet to the waist for 24 days in ice water. The mental strain was what made it so bad, and I was all Summer in getting over that hardship. I would not trade my past life for no millionaire's son's life, and I am still glad to be alive and in this particular world. I have done this just in bunches, and not very big bunches, for we had to try to keep Bill King off the Democratic ticket, which we did, and I have been interested in politics along the channels besides King.

So I have been kept busy, but I will ring-off for this time and you can ask me some more. Now I have a copy of this and so all you have to do is to name the page and I can revert back to and answer the question you wish to ask.

With love to all.

Sincerely Bert

Bert Loper  
519 So. 3rd East,  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

**I**t would be most impossible for another person to realize or understand just what it meant to me to take the trip through the Grand Canyon [with Don Harris in 1939], for the days, weeks, months, and years that I have put in on that river and in those canyons seem to have made me part of the whole grand set-up. There have, without doubt, been better boatmen than I who have traversed that mighty Canyon, but there have never been any that have given the time to the study of it than I have, for as I said, I seem to be part of it, for I have lived in it, on it, with it, and in an instance or two, under it. I have after a day's work laid on the bank and listened to it—I have listened to the grinding of *Mush Ice*—I have listened to it when it hardly made enough sound to hear at all. Then there would come a time when there would be a gentle murmur, which told me that it had begun to awake. Then from that there would come a swish as though it were becoming peeved at something. Then from that there would be boils, swirls, eddies, and whirls, and then I knew that the river had started house cleaning. But it always seemed that it got mad about it all, for it always acted angry during those times. I have listened to it from its very lowest to its very highest, and there would be a time when I would go out some morning and miss that angry sound, and although it would still be high and angry the sound would be gone, and I would know that its house cleaning was done. I have noticed the difference in the river on the rise and on the down. I have noticed the difference in high water and flood water, but I started to tell what it meant to me to make that trip through the Grand.

I had been disappointed so many times. So many times I had started out with the expectation of going through, and something would happen to keep me from the trip. So when it did come, well, I can never explain just how I feel or just what it means to me, and although I have made the most wonderful trip through I still want to do it again. Instead of breaking a record on time I would like to take just twice the time of before and try to grasp all the wonders of the mighty chasm—try to see all that there was to see. I do, in a way, feel glad that the other trips never materialized, for if they had, I would never have had the pleasure of this trip. Never was there such another one like it, and in my "ravings" I must say something of how I came to make this trip.

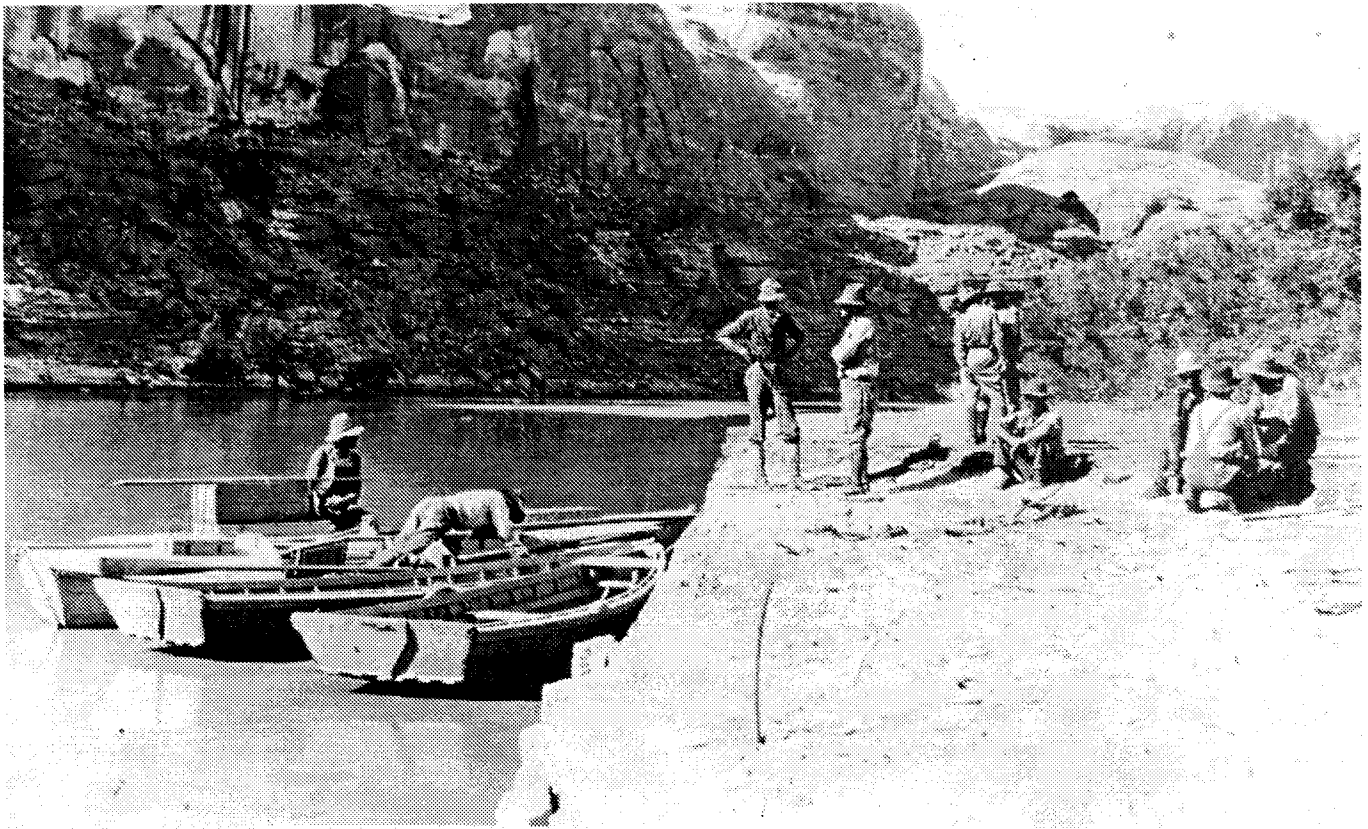
The credit of this trip goes to Don Harris, for he not only gave me his most loyal moral support, but financial support as well, and that one brings me to the other men that I have



traveled with. The trip was composed of four men: Don Harris, Bill Gibson, and Chet Klevin, and myself, and I would believe myself safe in saying that there was never four men thrown together like we were, and got along better than we. Sometimes I seemed unable to place Bill, but after Chet told me something about him, then I had it all arranged. Then there was Chet. What a wonderful job Mother Nature did when he came into this world. There could not be two like him. Never once did he fail. Don Harris, what wonderful parents he must have had, for a mother and father of inferior grade could not have produced such as he—and what a boatman. Right here is where I am tempted to reach out and try to grab a little glory for myself, for I still believe that the success of the trip was established at Badger and Soap Creek rapids. Don asked me a question of those two rapids that was never asked again; whether his confidence was established in me or himself I do not know, but suffice it to say that it was built up good and strong—point that there was never a hitch of any kind on our whole journey.

successful as the Grand Canyon trip. The trip was not just as harmonious as the Grand trip, because there were so many more in the party, and the interests were so wide apart. Three different kinds of engineers [Kelly Trimble, topographic engineer; Robert Allen, recorder; and Hugh Miser, geologist.], two of the boatmen carried rods for the survey [Elwyn Blake from Green River, Utah, and Hugh Hyde from Bluff, Utah] and our cook [Heber Christensen from Moab, Utah] was something of a crank too, but the chief was all man [Trimble]. But they were all good men and, while some of them had their faults, perhaps I too had some. But we all completed the trip good friends.

But in summing up all the men that I have made trips with, there were only two that I was prone to call "heels" [Charles Russell and Eugene LaRue] and since that time I have learned much that has softened my opinion of them. And that goes to show that there are many judgments that are too hasty.



**The 1921 U.S.G.S. San Juan and Cataract canyon surveys meet at the confluence of the Colorado and San Juan rivers in Glen Canyon. Courtesy of the Christensen Collection, Dan O'Laurie Canyon Country Museum, Moab, Utah.**

Those three youngsters and the doings of them remind me of other youngsters that have boated with me, and they were just like this bunch [referring to the crew of the San Juan River survey in 1921]. They were always ready to follow me wherever I went, and in many ways the trip was just as

The most trouble I ever had with anyone was Charles Russell and at one time we too were the very closest pals—all for each other. But we finally changed; I first noticed the change on our first trip through the Cataract Canyon, but it was more so during our 1914 trip when he refused to do anything

whatever in camp [probably because Bert owed Russell money]. And after we two split up and he got others to take my place, and had trouble with them all, and he was finally committed to an insane asylum. Then I knew I had judged him too hastily, and there were times when I used very harsh language to him, and now that he has been called to go on and the years have passed. I only remember Charles Russell as he was in those good old days. In looking back over this little article I find that I should have told about those two men that helped to make that trip so perfect.

They were Elwyn Blake and Leigh Lint [now referring to the Green River survey of 1922]. They both had their first rough water trip with me, in fact, this trip I spoke of was their first. Elwyn Blake had his first job after leaving high school [Green River High School] with me in Henry Mountains [placer gold mining at North Wash]. Then it was I who asked Mr. Trimble, our boss, to take him on the trip down the San Juan, and it was there that we had to use him on his first boating. The year following we took the trip I have just spoken of. But suffice it to say that they were both just grand boys that would make anything successful as long as they had the confidence and they surely seemed to have that very thing.

Starting back at the beginning of my boating and commenting on the men that I have had for companions, along about the first, there were two that surely were pals and (we being young at that time) we did about everything that many youngsters could think of. In fact we soon showed our preference to running rapids to placer mining and we had good-sized rapids near us, and we ran that old rapid forward, backward, sideways, and upside down. They were great pals too: George Edmondson, Jim Hambleton and I, often wonder what has become of them. There was Ed Monett who made the trip through the Cataract with Russell and I, and later went through the Grand with Russell. While I never liked him much I never disliked him. I first met him in Goldfield, Nevada, where I was hoisting engineer on the Little Florence Mine and he was top trammer. So that is how he became interested in the trip.

Another companion, and one of the finest men I have ever boated with, was Elsworth L. Kolb in 1916. He and I boated the Colorado River from the Shoshone Falls, about 10 miles above Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to the Cisco Pumphouse, taking in on our way the famous Westwater Canyon. At the Cisco Pumphouse we took the boat out and shipped it to Cimarron, Colorado, where we put the boat back in Gunnison. We went through some hardships that would have broken the hearts of many, but he and I came out better friends than we went in and my recollections of this trip are some of the most pleasant ones that I have. I could go on and enumerate many of our hardships, but suffice to say that they were many and severe. He now resides in Los Angeles. In 1918 I deviated a little from the boating game, for I had the honor of taking Professor Herbert E. Gregory (one of the foremost geologists of the world) [very true statement] on a pack trip from Green River, Utah, on a trip to the 50-Mile Mountain, which extends from Escalante to the Colorado River. We had some great

experiences, and Mr. Gregory is one of the great people that have been associated with me on my travels.

I cannot remember of any trip of any importance in 1919, but in 1920 I had the honor of being guide and boatman for a government expedition from the mouth of the Virgin River through the Boulder Canyon. When the first preliminary survey was made the trip was under the supervision of Mr. Homer Hamlin who was, at that time, consulting engineer for the United States Reclamation Service. In the party besides Mr. Hamlin was his assistant, Mr. Charles Wheeler of Los Angeles, Mr. Mulholland with his first assistant, Mr. Van Orman. Mr. Mulholland was city engineer for Los Angeles and constructor of the famous Los Angeles Aqueduct [Owens Valley]. Mr. Mulholland has since gone on and Mr. Van Orman has succeeded to the post held by Mr. Mulholland. A nicer bunch would be hard to find.

In 1921 I was head boatman for the government through the San Juan and the party was composed of Mr. Kelly Trimble, chief of the expedition, with Robert Allen, his recorder. We were accompanied on that trip by a government geologist by the name of Hugh D. Miser. The rodman of the expedition was Hugh Hyde and assisted by Elwyn Blake from [who is now living in] Monticello. Elwyn was drafted in as an extra boatman which finally extended to the Grand. Our cook was Heber Christensen from Moab, another bunch of wonderful men, and the friendship created there is still very pleasant memory. In 1922 I was head boatman of another government expedition from Green River, Wyoming, down the Green River to the town of Green River, Utah. The trip was under the supervision of our chief of 1921, Mr. Trimblé. Besides Mr. Trimble there was R. R. Woolley as recorder. Mr. Woolley is at present a government hydraulic engineer for the Utah Power and Light Company, who had charge of the finances of the trip. The two rodmen mentioned are the same two youngsters that I have mentioned before in this article. They both were boatmen for Colonel C. H. Birdseye on his trip through the Grand Canyon during the Summer of 1923. The trip of 1923 was piloted by Mr. Emery Kolb as head boatman. In view of the fact that I occupied the position as head for the government during the years of 1920, 1921, and 1922, so it would look to most people that I should have had that position with Col. Birdseye, but Mr. E. C. LaRue, a hydraulic engineer for the government, went to the Colonel and told him that I was too old to handle the job, so I was left out. I felt rather put out at that time, but since I have made the trip [with Don Harris], I am rather glad that it happened that way; for the trip I had was such a nice one that I am perfectly satisfied.

During the years that followed I made numerous trips through Glen Canyon and in 1929 I piloted two government engineers through Glen from the mouth of North Wash to Lee's Ferry, and they were two nice men. In 1920 I accompanied Dave Rust through with an attorney and his daughter. Their names were Mr. George Frasher and his daughter, Sarah, and a very delightful trip it was, too—nice people.

In 1936 I made a trip through the Salmon River, the River of No Return. This trip was made in company with Charlie Snell, and I still remember the trip with joy from all angles. In 1939 I took two government engineers from Hite to Lee's Ferry, and it would be hard to conceive a more delightful trip anywhere, and I never got such a kick out of geology as I did on that trip. And after I left them, or they left me, at the ferry and I continued on through the Grand Canyon. I sure missed them, for we had an entirely new batch of rocks, and no one to explain them to me, and I often think what a nice trip it was, and if I could take them both through the Canyon next Summer—just another dream I suppose.

I have tried to describe most of the men that I have traveled with, and tell what nice men and companions there are. So now I am going to tell you about the, you might say, the only one different man I made a trip with in 1914. Charles Russell and I have worked and bunked together in Telluride, Colorado, and were the very closest pals and friends—so in 1914. We started a trip together as I have described elsewhere, and in 1914 we started another. But I will try to describe the years between 1907 and 1914. Russell was an accomplished scholar in the Spanish language and also a good miner. So after he finished his trip through the Grand Canyon he secured a position with the Hearst-Hagin Mining Company in Old Mexico and put in five-years there, and he had a great knack of saving his money. So he came out with about all he had made during those years, and it was then that he conceived the idea of photographing the Canyon with moving pictures. He told me that he could get Monett, but that Monett would never be a rough water boatman, so he got me to go with him in Green River, the fore part of July, and proceeded to get our outfit arranged, and it was then that I soon found out that I had a different Russell to contend with, for he absolutely would not help in any way, and as a matter of course, there were quarrels between us. I am mentioning that at this time in view of what is to follow.

The equipment was of Russell's choosing and was a very incomplete one. The boats were Mullen steel pleasure boats and only 12 inches deep, and I predicted failure before we started, and besides, the covers had to be put on by hand, and as I said before, Russell would not help, so therefore the job of covering was a very incomplete one. Russell had two movie cameras and 20,000 feet of standard film, and I think that we lost about a mile of it in Cataract Canyon, and outside of the boats he had a very good outfit, but the boats should have been the foundation of the expedition, that is, where the equipment was not as it should be. We finally got started and so did the Summer rains, for by the time we reached the head of Cataract Canyon we had water galore, and soon found out that our boats were inadequate. But I started out to tell about Russell more than the outfit or our trip through the Cataract.

I have spoken of the change in Russell, as we were coming down the river, and I might have been about 75 yards in advance. I thought I heard someone talking, so I eased down on my rowing and it was Russell, and while I could not hear all that he said I could tell by what I did understand, and by the tone of his voice that he was fighting someone. So in the p.m. I again

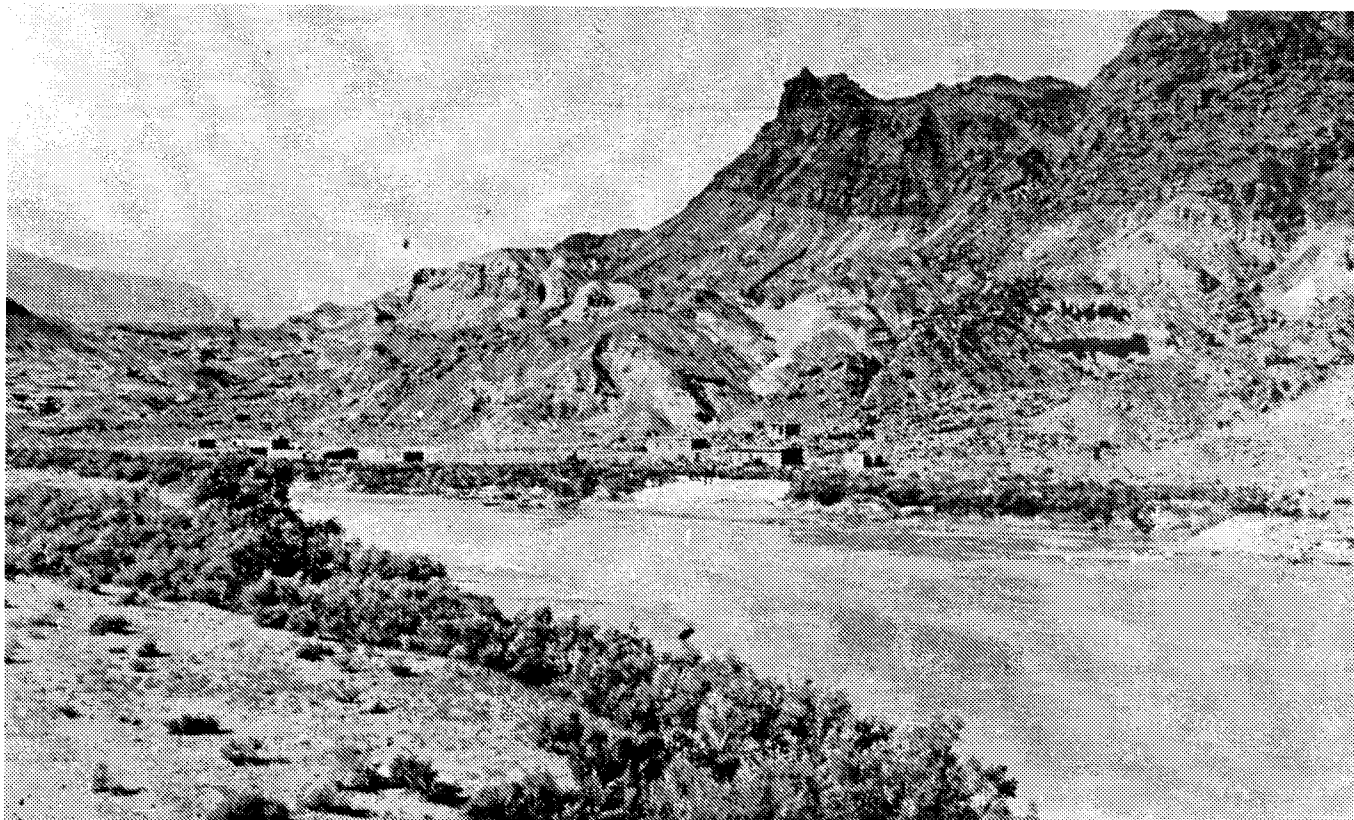
heard him going over the same talk that he made in the forenoon, and this time I could hear most of the words he used, and the next day it was the same both in the morning and again in the evening. So in the course of time I memorized the entire talk, and while my name was not mentioned I was positive that it was I whom he was fighting, and our first night in Cataract we made camp on the left bank of the river, and the campfire was between us, and in the night I was awakened, and Russell was sitting up in bed and going at it again, and when one takes into consideration that we were 120 miles from a human being it was just a little creepy, but the worst was still to come. I found out that we had 85 thousand feet of water [This puts the Cataract Canyon traverse date in June rather than July of 1914, as reported in River Runners of the Grand Canyon by David Lavender] and in the Big Drop of the river was a fury—some of the little rapids were big ones and some of the big ones were entirely wiped out, for instance, Rapid #4 in low water is very tame, but on this trip #4 had the very biggest waves that I ever ran, and all a man had to do was to take the V and ride those big waves and there was no trouble, but it was here that I began to think that Russell was losing his "NIP", for instead of taking the big water he pulled out to one side and took what we call short water, that is, instead of riding 20 foot waves he took 6 or 7-foot ones and in so doing, he would invariably water-log our hatch, for it would not keep out the water, and as the water containers were not water-tight either we lost plenty of film.

So we continued this until we had traversed more than 20 miles of the canyon when Russell lost his boat, and that ended the trip, for on the Big Drop in the canyon the water was a fury, so we decided to leave the outfit and walk, so we had to walk 20 miles and when about half-way we had to make a raft across the river, and then, me suspicious of Russell losing his nip, was verified, for when we had the raft made and pushed off it was then that he went white, and would not do anything to help, and I managed to work the raft over by about 6-feet from the shore Russell gave a jump, and that started the raft for the opposite shore, and I had to leave the raft and swim out, and as a matter of course there was more rough talk, but we continued on our way up to the Spanish Bottom, and we arrived there by dark with no bedding and only a little sack of biscuits for our meal, and I think I never saw it rain very much harder, and we had a very miserable night, but the next morning it was clear and we proceeded to climb the old trail when about half-way up I scouted the left fork, and I soon found out that the left fork was not the one I returned to the point where we divided, and I shouted at the top of my voice and no answer, and I shouted several times and no answer. There happened to be a large rock at that place so I started up the trail, and when I passed around the rock there sat Russell—some more rough talk. We finally reached the top and about all we could see were box canyons, and it was 120-miles back to Green River and I did not know the trail. So I had heard the sheepmen talk about the trail "under the ledge" [Doll House, Maze District], so I told Russell that we had better take that one for it was only about 70 miles to Hite and I had two horses there. So we started and the task of leading Russell those 70 miles was rather trying, for we would get up on a high point and select our route and start, and then Russell would start off in another direction. And then I would

have to get him and steer him on the right course. So after two days we reached Hite about 11 p.m. with our feet in very bad shape; nearly as raw as beef steak. But I am trying to show the changed condition of Russell over what he used to be. But in view of what happened later I overlook all that and try to remember him as he was. For, in the course of time, he was committed to an insane asylum in Arizona and later passed on. So now I can look on the whole thing as another and not my old pal.

associated with him. And my hope is that I may again sometime be associated with him.

There are others too that I hope to always be able to call friends. The San Juan trip was one that I believe made me some wonderful friends: Hugh D. Miser of the U. S. Government and Kelly Trimble of the Topographical Branch of the Survey were both great men and friends. The trip through Glen this Summer was different to any other trip I ever made for I was not only



**Lees Ferry, Arizona, in 1921.**  
**Courtesy of the Christensen Collection, Dan O'Laurie Canyon Country Museum, Moab, Utah.**

But now I wish to come back up and say something about another one of my companions, Bill Gibson, the photographer of my last trip. I had mentioned already that there were times that I did not know just how to take him until Chet told me something, and then I looked at it in another light. There were times when he seemed morose. But after I learned then I knew better, and it also brought home to me the fact that we are oft times prone to pass snap judgement, and I will say that I have never seen anyone that performed his duties thorough or complete than he, for he seemed to sleep with his duties; seemed to always be trying to think up something better or to better his work, and it was a joy and a pleasure to be

taught geology, but we debated about everything debatable and always in a friendly manner. I believe I could go on much further about the wonderful men that I have traveled with, but I will let it go at this for the time being.

**End of Manuscript**

