

# 110 days on the rivers? --- shades of Major Powell

A hardy group of Moab river runners left last week on a 110-day "busman's holiday." They

put their rafts in the Green River at Flaming Gorge Dam and set of downstream, with Lake

Meade on the Arizona/Nevada border as their goal.

They hope to reach that goal

the first week in January if all goes well. Their several weeks will be spent on the Green River with "civilization stops" at Jensen and Green River, Utah

The rafts will be pulled from Lake Powell at Hite and portaged to Lee's Ferry. From there, they will proceed on through the Grand Canyon.



From left, river rats and two shuttle drivers included: Steve Young, Michael Omana, Joe Englebright, Steve Cooper, Zane Taylor, Molly Martin, Nancy Allemand, Suzette and John Weisheit.

Photos by Weingarden.



The big question was whether all that gear and all that food and all that other paraphernalia plus seven sojourners would fit on four rafts.



The answer? It would! Ready to put in.



In our camps the hours pass by with good conversation, good food, hot drinks and libations. We play games, hike, sing, dance and read. Before going to bed we make a group entry into our official trip diary and read captions from the books of ancestral boatmen who made the trip long before us.

### **PROGRESS NOTES ON:**

# **The seven who took too much on the river**

by The Same

On September 22, 1996, four assorted vehicles carried five boats and equipment for seven Moab locals to their launch point below Flaming Gorge in North-eastern Utah.

This was the start of an expedition that will end sometime in mid-January of 1997 on Lake Mead in Arizona.

Today, October 1, nine days and 90 miles later, we write from the depths of Lodore Canyon in Dinosaur National Monument. Today's camp is called Wild Mountain and we will stay here for two nights. Behind us are the famous rapids of Lodore Canyon: Disaster Falls, Triplet and Hell's Half Mile. These rapids were run with success by this well-seasoned crew.

The crew is made up Moabites who work professionally for Tag-A-Long and Sheri Griffith Expeditions, namely:

*...we are celebrating our dedication to the remaining free-flowing rivers of the American West and the peace they give us.*

Nancy Allemand, Joe Englbrecht, Molly Martin, Zane Taylor, Susette and John Weisheit, and Steve T-Berry Young.

In this year of 1996, some might say we are celebrating the centennial of Utah's statehood. Some might say we are celebrat-



We started the trip in rain suits with cold and frost following us for four days above and near Brown's Park. The weather changed to clear, sunny days with afternoon breezes. We anticipate the coming 100+ days left of our trip, which will end sometime in January in Arizona at Lake Meade.

ing the centennial of the river trips of George Flavell and Nathaniel Galloway. We would like to say that indeed, we are, but we would also like to say that we are celebrating our dedication to the remaining free-flowing rivers of the American West and the peace they give us.

In our camps the hours pass by with good conversation, good food, hot drinks and libations. We play games, hike, sing, dance and read. Before going to bed we make a group entry into our official trip diary and read captions from the books of ancestral boatmen.

We started our trip in rain

suits with cold and frost following us for four days. Halfway through Brown's Park and into Lodore Canyon the weather changed into clear, sunny days with afternoon breezes. Warm enough to leave tents unassembled, to bath, wash clothes, and air sleeping bags.

Fall is upon us. The Cottonwoods and Box Elders are golden. The Sumacs are orange and red. Yellow and purple composites are flowering all around us. We also marvel at the complex geology of the Uinta Mountains, the only massive east-west trending mountain system of the Western Hemisphere.

We anticipate with great enthusiasm the coming 100+ days left of our trip and look forward to sharing them with the readers of *The Times-Independent*.

*A river journal, Part II---110+ days on the Green and Colorado...*



Fall is upon us on the river. The cottonwoods and box elders are golden. The sumacs are orange and red. Yellow and purple composites are flowering all around us. We marvel at the complex geology of the Uinta Mountains, the only massive east-west trending mountain system in the Western Hemisphere. In this year of 1996, we seven river people from Moab

are celebrating the centennial of Utah's statehood. We are also celebrating our dedication to the remaining free-flowing rivers of the American West and the peace they give us. This Duckie, shown here with Molly Martin, is one of four craft being used by our group. It made for great solo rafting through the famous rapids of Lodore Canyon.



# The seven who ate too much on the river: progress notes

(Editor's Note: This is Part III of a series of articles written by a party of seven Moab profes-

sional river guides who are retracing the trail of Major John Wesley Powell, from Flaming Gorge Dam to Lake Meade in Arizona. The trip, which will end in early January, will take well over a hundred days.)

## By The Same

Today, October 14, we find ourselves camped in the heart of Desolation Canyon where Douglas firs grow tucked into the shadowy crags of the cliffs. Here, at the mouth of a side canyon called Cedar Ridge, we are camped for several nights for reasons besides making excellent progress. We have completed over 200 river miles in 21 days and have about 700 to complete in the 90 days remaining in our

expedition.

We have had gloriously warm days now for two weeks, though last night worried us momentarily with strong gusty winds that forced us to douse our evening campfire and secure stronger lines for our boats. This wind continued into the night, but abated into yet another glorious day.

For the Uinta Basin reach, the group was assisted by a 9.6 H.P. Montgomery Ward special (outboard motor) pushing a 51-foot "modified" Diamond rig (four boats tied together) that allowed us to average 4.5 mph, according to our GPS (a navigation device). We enjoyed the open spaces here with clear starry nights. In and

around Ouray National Wildlife Refuge we were privileged to see a flock of over 200 American white pelicans, and as many sandhill cranes. We also saw a female moose and during a hike saw, a first for many of us who live in the Great Basin Desert, a horny toad (lizard?). It was also a big thrill for us to see the unfamiliar Tertiary rock formations, also the mouths of the Duchesne (Uinta) and White Rivers.

The fall colors continue to move with us as we progress southerly. Here in Desolation Canyon, the peak has yet to occur and the fall blooming flowers continue to burst open. Butterflies, dragon flies and lizards scurry and flutter about, as do the many songbirds who too enjoy this Indian summer.

Hiking and reading are the two most popular activities of the expedition. We have discovered many new and interesting things in our unhurried sojourns from camp. Fourteen books have already stimulated our minds, and an exchange club, with reviews, has already begun.

Today clothes, boats and bodies are being cleaned. A boat leak is being repaired, a guitar is being strummed, and a cribbage board is being fashioned from driftwood dimension lumber.

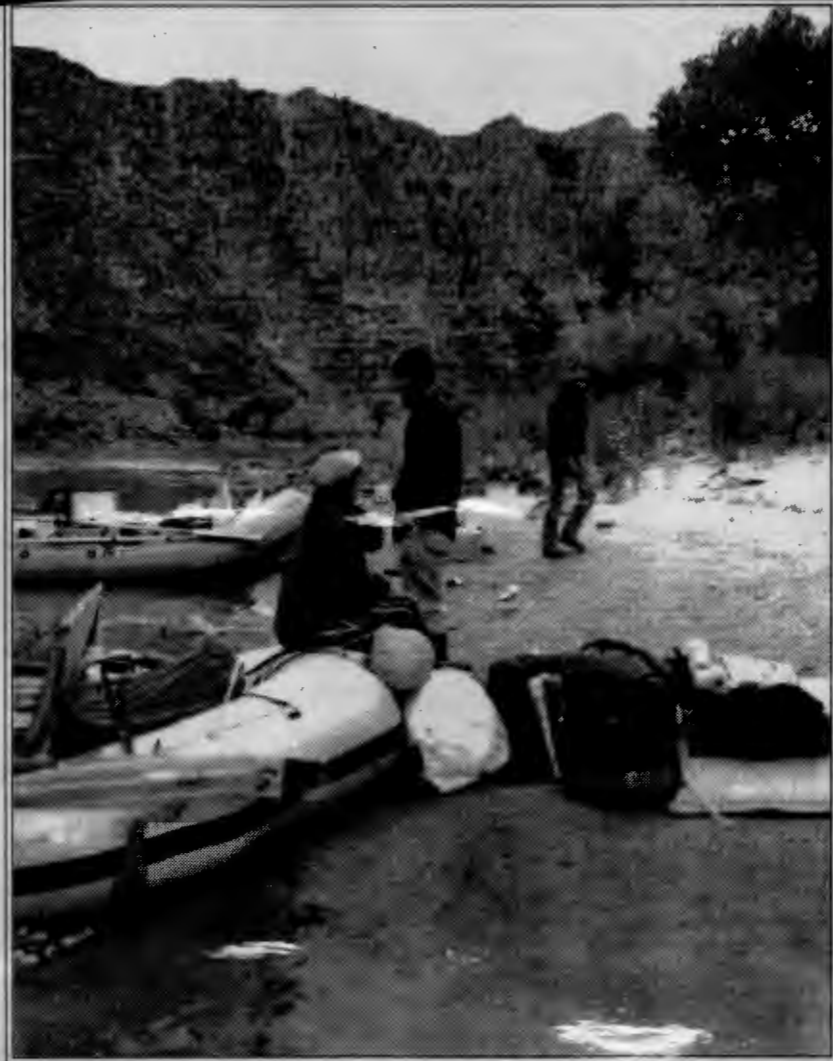
The meals have been both delicious and nutritious. We have had specialties such as stuffed orange roughy, hominy stew, chili

rellano pie, and spinach lasagne. Nobody has become ill so far—our health is good—but we all have been troubled with bouts of flatulence.

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As we pass the twenty-day mark on our expedition to Lake Meade, fall colors travel with us as we enter Desolation Canyon. Our leisurely journey allows lots of time for exploring, reading, and solitude.



We camped for three days at Three Canyon on the Green River. We are near the juncture of four Utah counties, Carbon, Uintah, Grand and Emery. It seems fitting to be camped here on a trip that coincides with Utah's Centennial year of statehood.

### ***A river adventure, Part IV:***

## **The seven who bundled up on the cold nights**

By the Same.

The weather, as expected, has changed dramatically for us on day 28 of our river expedition to Lake Mead.

On October 20th we awoke to below freezing temperatures with snow on the high terraces of Desolation Canyon near Rock Creek.

We boated three miles downstream to a sunny camp at Three Canyon where we have about 8 hours of precious sunlight a day; we will stay here for four nights.

Though the skies are clear today, October 22, the wind is blowing with occasional gusts. Fortunately we have with us a roomy, modern kitchen tent that allows us to cook our meals in

relative comfort.

Last night was our coldest night yet, as the dish washing pails had a 1/2 inch of ice on the top.

One couple will be going into their winter sleeping bags tonight, as their summer bags failed to perform adequately for toasty toe conditions.

The peak fall colors for the deciduous trees has finally arrived.

The only migrating bird we have seen lately is the belted kingfisher. The resident dark-eyed juncos are everywhere busily feeding to keep warm. We do likewise, but hiking is the best warming trend for us so far, as is a glowing night time fire.

Our spirits remain high and

we anticipate a trend of warm sunny weather with occasional storms blowing in from time-to-time.

This is fine—we're prepared—after all we are also the seven who took too much!

At this camp called Three Canyon, we are positioned before the juncture of four Utah counties: Carbon, Uintah, Grand and Emery. It seems fitting to be camped here on a trip that coincides with Utah's centennial year of statehood.

Many famous river runners have lived in these counties: Harry T. Yokey, Elwyn Blake, Bert Loper, Nathaniel Galloway, Seymour Dubendorff, Bus Hatch, Frank Swain, Tom Wimmer and Wayne McConkie—just to mention a few.

Wait till we can add to this list once we reach the San Juan county line!

If we were at this camp 100 years ago, George Flavell would be downstream in the Grand Canyon with his river companion Ramon Montez. Nathaniel Galloway and William Richmond would be in close proximity, but this is a good educated guess since records with specific dates are not available for us to rely upon.

It is interesting to us that we, who live in the fast-paced 20th century, are traveling slower than our 19th century predecessors.

## Part V:

# The Seven Pleistocene Boaters

by The Same

Today is November 1st and we are making our approach to Green River, Utah, where we will resupply. There is talk of a jaunt to Ray's Tavern for burgers, beer and fries; not to mention a friendly game or two of pool.

Our first stop before camping at the State Park will be to visit the John Wesley Powell River History Museum. Here we will commiserate with the historic boatmen of yore whose trips we are celebrating. We plan to also make book purchases here as our

reading supply continues to be consumed.

Today is day 40 of our expedition and the weather is sometimes good and sometimes bad. As we write it is calm and sunny, but it wasn't long ago at the foot of Desolation Canyon where the wind howled continuously for 40+ hours. Wind more than any other meteorological phenomena weakens our spirits somewhat, until it too passes into a glorious day like today. As Kurt Vonnegut said, "And so it goes."

Before us is Labyrinth, Stillwater and Cataract Canyons. These are familiar territories to these Moab river guides. We are all quite excited about the hiking and exploration we intend to do, places not normally visited by us during the course of a commercial river trip. We hope for a warm late fall as ice on Lake Powell could seriously impact our logistics.

We do not intend to traverse Glen Canyon on this particular trip in protest to its inundation by Congressional decree. We agree with Barry Goldwater, who recently proclaimed in his retirement from Congress, that construction of Glen Canyon Dam was a mistake. We hope the citizens of the United States will begin to endorse alternative energy technologies and save our wild rivers.

Postscript: Today, November 3rd, we are at the boat ramp of Green River State Park and enjoying these wonderful facilities. Here we are taking hot showers, disposing of our trash, watering our jugs and dumping our human waste into the sewer system. We appreciate very much how our state, county and city taxes support such fine facilities. This also includes the educational facility here, that being the John Wesley Powell River History Museum.

We also would like to say thanks to our Green River friends for their excellent hospitality: Harvey DeWitt and Amber McCoy. They patiently shuttled us around town to such places as the Laundromat, cafes and stores.

A special thanks go to our friends in our home base of Moab. These would include our employers, Sheri Griffith and Bob Jones and retailers such as Don and Denise Oblak. We also

thank our shuttle drivers Steve Cooper, Michael Omana and Mary Weingarden who have helped us immensely in our resupplies as well. We all look forward to Michael and Mary join-

ing us on the Grand Canyon reach when we will become the nine who have too many boats. And last but not least, we thank Ken and Pam Devore and Jose Tejada who came up to Green River to say "Howdy."



The "Magnificent" Seven enjoyed the conveniences at Green River State Park and in the community during a two day stop there last week after more than a month on the Green River. They were joined there by friends Amber McCoy and Harvey DeWitt from Green River, far right, and Jose Tejada, second from left, from Moab, along with other friends who visited during their brief stop in civilization.