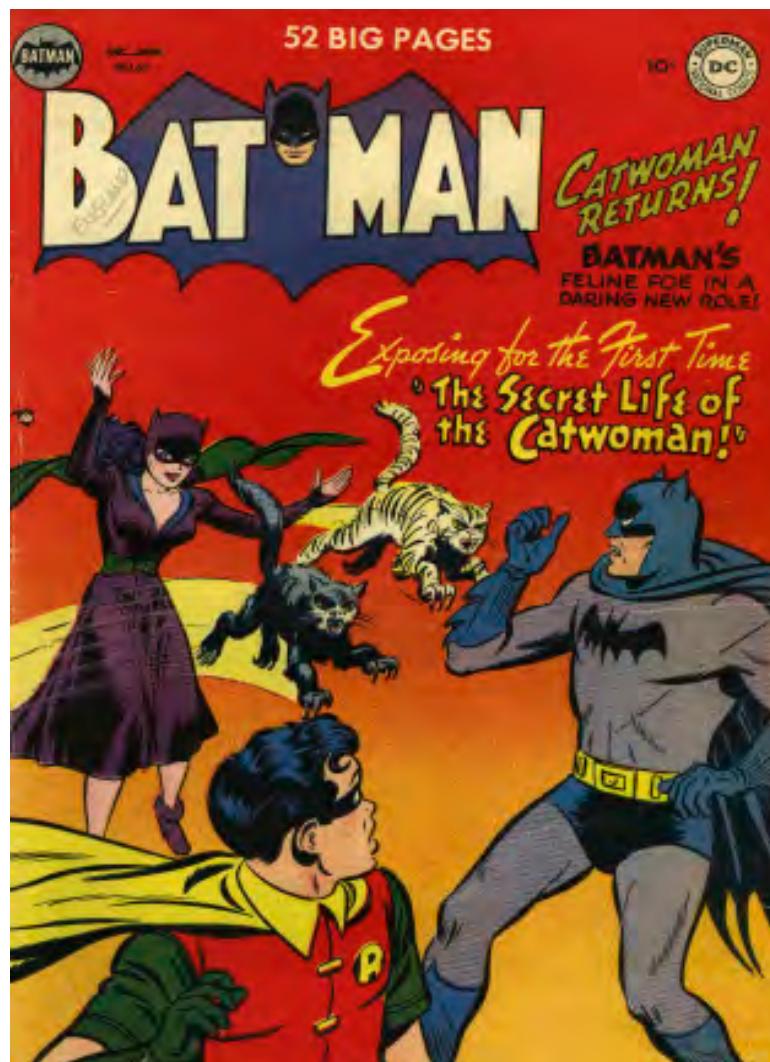


# Chapter XX

# Batman in Glen Canyon

## The Canyon Surveys

*Well, the BIG River always takes its toll, they say. It has extracted one from me; it has captured darn near every waking moment—I dream about it. Bad enough before, now I'm hopelessly lost. That damned country is worse than any woman or any bottle in the hold it takes on a man.* —Dick Sprang



# The Place No One Knew

On a crisp October day in Glen Canyon in 1950, a WWII ten-man naval assault boat drifted silently on the placid waters of Colorado in Glen Canyon toward the mouth of the Escalante River. At the oars were writer, history buff, and Batman comic book art icon Dick Sprang.<sup>1</sup> Aleson was camped at the mouth of the Escalante, resting after spending three days searching for signs of lost vagabond Everett Ruess.<sup>2</sup> Aleson had never met Sprang, nor was he aware that anyone else was in front of him or behind. It was a time when virtually no one ran rivers, especially not the Colorado through Glen Canyon. Aleson may have felt the presence of someone to explain his layover. When he scrambled up side canyons, he left messages: “Don’t leave, wait for me.” Just as rivers merge, so too do they bring lives together that by fate or design are forever transformed. It was Dick Sprang who Aleson had been intuitively waiting for, and the fortuitous meeting began a nearly quarter century friendship, one that would last the rest of Aleson’s life.

In a paradise soon lost, Glen Canyon with its unimaginable immensity and distances swallowed light in black shadow, revealing a foreboding landscape reminiscent of the works of painter Paul Gustave Doré.<sup>3</sup> The next moment, shafts of light would reveal an intricate maze of sandstone canyons, incised drainages, twisting like coiled snakes: and the infinite colors—blood reds, vermillion, cobalt orange—would challenge painter Albert Bierstadt<sup>4</sup> as he mixed them and brushed them onto canvas. Here, however, painting—indeed, even the Louvre with all its art treasures—seemed irrelevant. As Dick Sprang neared the confluence, he may have felt the spirits of the ancient dwellers of this land whom some call the Anasazi, the more politically correct call the Ancestral Puebloans, but whom Aleson called the “Moki.” He may have thought of misfit and wanderer Everett Ruess, who witnessed Sprang’s passing boat from high on a sandstone pinnacle, and laughing into the void shouted, “You’ll never find me... I belong to the ages... I have seen more beauty than I can bear and been swallowed up in it...”

Now the sacrosanct Glen Canyon is gone, the river throttled. Though both Aleson and Sprang are gone, their story—compiled from letters and Aleson’s journals of time spent together in southeast Utah’s Glen Canyon—is thoughtful, comical, and compelling. The constant in their writing is an appreciation for the unadulterated beauty of this untrdden windblown wonderland, and an unquenchable curiosity about all who ventured into the canyons—the “Moki,” the Spanish explorers, fur trappers, miners, the cowboys, the derelicts and fugitives. Sprang and Aleson were also deeply interested in Glen Canyon’s natural history, river hydrology, and geology to such an extent that they formed Canyon Surveys to explore and record all they discovered. And they bring the lost Glen Canyon alive. *The Place No One Knew*<sup>5</sup> returns as a vibrant ecosystem, a scientific laboratory, an archaeological treasure trove, an open history book and a slickrock wonderland where three kindred souls, a dog, and a cat shared a special friendship. For five weeks in the fall of 1951, they took notes, played, drank late around the fire, and felt the power of a river whose loss remains one of the worst ecological disasters in the west.

More than a year passed after Aleson and Sprang meet. Their correspondence intensified. While Harry was guiding a group through Glen Canyon at the mouth of Forbidden Canyon, his pilot friend Joe Moser air-dropped a letter dated June 11, 1952, from Dick Sprang at Mystery Ranch in Sedona, Arizona.

Hi Harry!

We cancelled our San Juan run after checking with USGS in Flagstaff that the Colorado at Lees Ferry was running 115,000 cubic feet per second. Just learned from New York that a special Batman project needed attention. This caused me to definitely postpone Mexican Hat embarkation of May 15 to 21st. Your advice to await a falling stage tied in with my original decision to postpone. With emergency work at last off the board on the 23rd, I was too damned pooped to spit. We decided that a mere week in Glen wasn't worth the labor of organizing equipment. Had promised New York that I would begin work on Batman publishing schedule June 1st. So, on May 28th cancelled all spring river activity.<sup>6</sup>

My wife Dudy and I plan a fall trip of 5 weeks in Glen Canyon—one boat, Pard and Mickey, and no schedule. Now five weeks is a long time: two people, even with a dog and cat could get very, very lonesome. You are a rare individual who offered yourself to us quietly as a new friend. Harry, you are our sort, and when we met again and bridged the midnight hours with the good talk of long dead campfires we were certain of it. We shared a broad plain of mutual interest and humor, and though we knew you never spoke of it subjectively, we knew you were hopelessly in love with that land of brooding cliffs and lonesome canyons beyond the beaten trails. And so, when again Dudy and I are camped beneath the high red walls, and midnight wind speaks of long ago and far way, we want you to share our fire, our hopes and plans and dreams, and tomorrow's trail. Perhaps I told you at one time that I did considerable writing—fiction and art-



*Among the brooding cliffs and lonesome canyons.*

ticles for lesser magazines. It was lousy stuff, and though I made a living at it for a time, I soon let it slide as an occupation. Lately, I've picked it up again (strictly as a supplement to Batman) at the insistence of Brooks Sheppard who spent the winter with us in the guest cabin. Brooks is a top-flight writer (Harper's etc.) and for some unfathomable reason is determined to help me strike for the better markets.

At present I can see two major articles: an illustrated report, for Collier's or the Saturday Evening Post, on the work and adventures of Harry Aleson, Colorado River Man; for the same markets, an illustrated article on an extraordinary mystery that is comparable to the other great mysteries of history—"What Happened to Everett Ruess?" Accurately written in a quiet, matter-of-fact-tone, but with vividness in illustrative detail, I think the two subjects can command exceptional appeal and find a place in scores of magazines from Atlantic Monthly on down to the truth that love of adventure is universal among men.

You are living an extraordinary life doing a mighty fascinating job in a country running over with universal appeal of adventure. Your techniques are remarkable and your personality and background unusual for one who is a river guide. You're prime material for a major magazine and you deserve national attention. As for the Ruess article (a tremendous job) we could begin work on it in the fall by going into Davis Gulch together and making a photographic coverage. Come down when you finish this trip.      Best regards, Dick Sprang

\* \* \*

Perhaps over a bottle of Jim Beam whiskey at Sprang's Mystery Ranch, Dick proposed a plan to Aleson for a five-week exploring expedition into Utah's canyon country bordering on the Colorado River. Using government aerial photos and specially prepared low-altitude photos, they planned to make their way from the river back into the wilderness and Slickrock Badlands that are a completely unmapped maze of canyons and domes. They called this endeavor "Canyon Surveys." After extensive research into Ruess's writing and his possible motive in leaving pack animals, Sprang and Aleson thought they had deduced Ruess' destination and where he left the last known camp. They planned to search the area, hitherto uninvestigated, for clues to explain his disappearance.



*Dick Sprang's sketches of Harry Aleson*



*This was no usual sightseeing, dude carrying, "boy ain't this purty country" kind of trip.*

On October 4, 1952, Sprang wrote this letter from Mystery Ranch in Sedona to the *Verde Independent* and *Arizona Daily Sun*: "Perhaps the things that make our expedition different from the usual sightseeing, dude-carrying, 'boy ain't this purty country' river trips is that we're making a darned earnest effort to pin down some concrete knowledge of that little-known country north of Lee's Ferry."

There is much up there of historical and physical interest that has gone unrecorded, and we think it time some agency was dedicated to just that—and [would] make this information available to all who want it. Hence our Canyon Surveys, organized to collect and classify historical and physiographic studies of the remote southwestern canyons adjoining the Colorado and San Juan Rivers.<sup>7</sup> Harry Aleson, my wife, and I will launch at Hite on the Colorado River in two specially rigged navy assault boats on a five-week exploring expedition. My shepherd dog Pard will make things interesting for tough hardboiled cat Mickey, who won't use the aerial photos; they have a better way of picking trails. The party will also investigate the possible explanation to the mysterious disappearance of Everett Ruess in 1934, and will be cut off from outside communication for five weeks."

Deadlines and work flow plagued Sprang's departure. He called the head editor in New York and in a letter to Aleson wrote "I am swimmingly shucking out pages of Batman release No. 1 of the three that must be done before we head your way. BUT—as yet—I've received no word from the office as to the speed with which scripts are winged toward me. And everything depends on that. They have a hell of a time getting scripts and I fully appreciate their efforts to make possible these long trips with you, so I can't be too importunate; I have to spur them gently." Finally, on October 10, 1952, Canyon Surveys launched from Hite, Utah.



# CANYON SURVEYS JOURNAL

## COLORADO RIVER THROUGH GLEN CANYON

OCTOBER 10—NOVEMBER 22, 1953

I layed stones in the form 'A' here. From about 10:30 until 2, we are at the Moki House for many pictures. Dick had suggested yesterday that we call it, "Three Warrior Ruins" from the 3 bold paintings. Let us hope it will be called by this name. (The paintings of the warriors are phalic, or rather, more properly, denoting 'stag') The October sunshine here is hot. Dudy, Paul & Mickey are inside house most of time. Dudy poses for many photos for Dick. I remove all sand, etc. from a beautifully-made mealong bin. Smoothly mortared joints. It is about 14 x 26 inches. The mealong stone sloped at about 40 degrees, and may formerly have been a metate. I pose for pictures here for Dick. We use the heavy mano found two days ago in the broken section of wall.

Dudy digs a bit into the rocked firepit in the Moki House. I lowered myself into the kiva. Toward the back wall, it is possible

up main canyon (2nd left Bank one), now thru narrows, thru brush, over rocky bottom until after 3 pm. Dick stops, looking into a high cave saying, "Look at that." There are 3 large, white paintings, figures holding raised shields. Directly, I spot a Cliff Dwelling or Moki House to left of paintings. When Dad overtakes us with Mickey, Dick + I leave packs and climb up talus to visit the ruins. We see 2 rooms in complete condition and a kiva with a partial roof hole. Several hundred pounds of rock have fallen off wall and dropped onto portion of roof. Main cross-leg has decomposed, dropping one end onto floor. The stringers for ladder lean together at top. 6 or 7 willow bindings encircle stringers. One rung hangs askew near bottom of one stringer. Floor is undisturbed, but covered with sand + light, wind-blown rubbish. Many cobwebs. Rock deflector for firepit is in place. Entrance to draft shaft is open. Shaft is complete to roof height. A

Of all the canyons of the Colorado, Glen is the most beautiful and rewarding of them all, provides the most comfortable boating, with just enough swift water to make it interesting. I will treasure my memory of those few moments at Trachyte Creek. The thrill of a lifetime—the years of reading, the dreams, plans, preparations—feeling the ooze of Colorado River mud between my toes, the muted roar in my ears, even though this rapid was about as small as anyone could find. It could have been Lava Falls and I wouldn't have been more thrilled. Remember the first one, Harry. That will never come again.

—Dick Sprang



*Hite at mouth of White Canyon. Henry Mountains in distance.*

The day prior to leaving on expedition, the party drove to the mouth of the Dirty Devil, hoped in a motor boat, then hiked to cave where John Wesley Powell's boat Canonita was stored and possibly abandoned during the winter of 1871–1872.

OCT. 10 **Boating party leaves Hite** for old Lees Ferry “to land November 15, or later.” Notes for Canyon Surveys begin officially at mile 162.5, with a plan to make notes each one-tenth of a mile—“These being the first field notes made under partnership of myself and R. W. Sprang, to be known as Canyon Surveys.”

OCT. 11 **They dine on Dudy's superlative** cooking, then hike up Fourmile Creek and note huge chunks of a “much tumbled Shinarump<sup>8</sup> choked canyon mouth transversely.” Upon seeing a small piece of petrified wood exposed in the Shinarump conglomerate, Aleson noted that its formation was not properly explained or accepted.

OCT. 12 **Party visits Bert Loper's “Hermitage”** at mile 150.1,<sup>9</sup> his gold mine claim from 1908 to 1915. “Dudy reclines in shade,” and after visiting Moki house ruin, they drifted down to Ticaboo (Ute word for friendly) and landed on right bank at mile 148.1. “Very colorful Chinle Shales<sup>10</sup> across the river. Excellent dinner.



OCT. 13 "After good breakfast, we help Dudy move kitchen to a more level place under willows. Dick and I set up field office for Canyon Surveys. For a worktable we rig up the varnished box used for kitchen table that was supported by a low, curved back of a willow, and also made a perfect seat-post. Most of the day we work over notes, maps, aerial stereos and discuss plans. Another fine dinner and pleasant evening around



*Sprang and Aleson work over notes, maps, and aerials and discuss plans.*

OCT. 14 *Sprang and Aleson cross river*, walk along foot of Chinle Shale hummocks, then start up rocky draw opposite mile 147.7. "The Wingate is a sheer wall and prevents our rimming out. We go down easier pitches to river and row back to camp. Delicious dinner, campfire."

OCT. 15 *Early morning walk reveals* distant lightning striking velvet-like Navajo domes. Aleson hiked up Ticaboo to "get into an area with huge fins I've seen from the air. About a mile up, I make movies of remains of Cass Hite's Cabin and near-by graves of Hite and Dehlin."<sup>11</sup> Aleson dashed up an abandoned meander (old river channel) where in the main fork of the creek he discovered two large, deep pools. He continued up canyon to junction with Kayenta formation,<sup>12</sup> where he shot movies of the Henry Mountains. Polishing off a bottle of crème de cacao, he leaves "the brown bottle in a depression on dome, blocked about by sandstones." Aleson's mind whirled... as he recalled that Cass Hite, disputing an gold claim, shot to death a man named Kohler who worked the North Wash placer claim... hoodoos haunted him; numbers, distances, and calculations overwhelm that may or may not be of importance to the Canyon Survey. He writes, "Leave view point at 2:28. Count steps and place a pebble in a pocket each 1,000 steps all the way back to camp. Walk steadily for 2 Hrs 15 Min stopping but twice for water. At camp at 4:43. Counted 13,066 steps. Average pace is 30 inches or 2.5 feet; hiked approximately 32,665 feet. If hiking rate was approx. 3 mi per Hr, then 2 Hr 15 Min equals 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles. Dudy and Dick rowed back from across the river.



*Aleson at Cass Hite Inscription, Mile 43.9.*

OCT. 16 **"Break camp and go on. Stopped to visit old drift-log cabin on Ticaboo Bar, about mile 147.5. Roof in fair state: door faced east, no windows."** At mile 146.5 they pull over at a large island and surmise that "five casings in place" had been used in test-boring for gold-bearing gravels by Robert Brewster Stanton. Next they stoped at Bert Seabolt's patented claim at Good Hope Bar<sup>13</sup> and discovered that the wooden portion of cabin had burned to the ground, then on to search for artifacts at Mi 144.9 where Aleson had camped during his Lone Month in Glen Canyon, then down to Mummy Cold Spring to mile 141.8 for camp.



OCT. 17 **Aleson loaded the Mai Bee, the boat he used on his Grand Canyon traverses in 1949, 1950, and 1952.** He tied it stern to stern to Sprang's boat, made a dash for the rim carrying only his nine-pound motion picture camera, made a small cairn on a ledge, and writes, "Had to make several hand-climbs, not recommended." After exploring a high cave, he crossed over about a mile to Cedar Canyon where, after three attempts, he found a route down to meet Sprang, who had just arrived at the river. Aleson notes that his "little jaunt" covered six miles and took a bit over four hours. Aleson and Sprang rowed on to land at mile 135.1, just below the framework that supported the Bennett Water Wheel on Olympia Bar that in 1949, high water had carried away what remained of it. "Dick and I go onto upper bar and took pictures of old mine-car. We go down river to make camp on rock ledge, right bank mile 134.1. Good dinner, campfire, on Sun Dog Bar."<sup>14</sup>



Tapestry Wall dwarfs boat.

OCT. 18 *Sprang and Aleson hiked to the* top of Tapestry Wall and returned to camp.

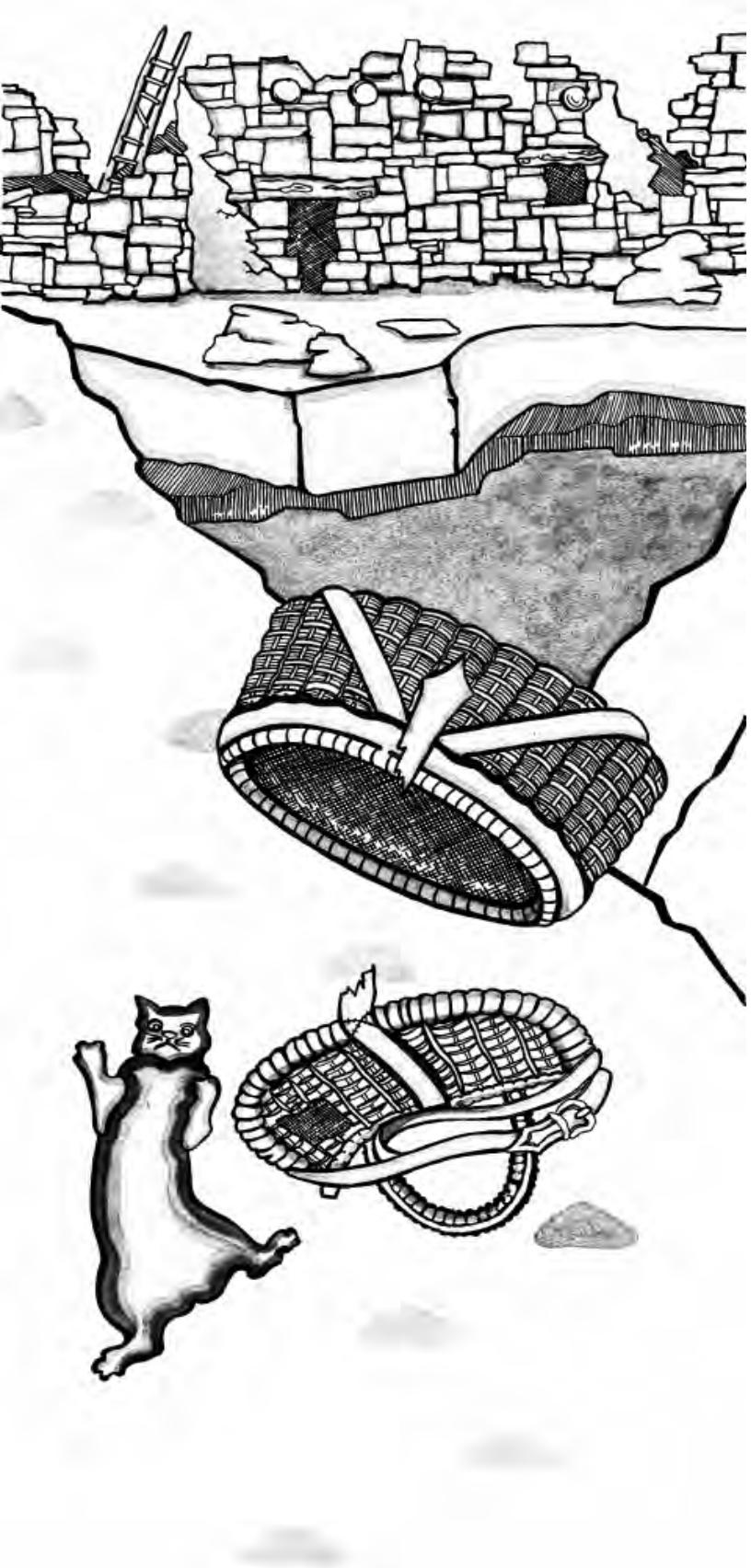
OCT. 19 *"Scouting today from shore, in caves and* from boat down to mile 132.2 L.B. [left bank]. We row across river to mile 133.9 and go up a beautiful glen. Took pictures down river, then from top of hogback<sup>15</sup> near mile 133. Camp at mile 132.1, where we clear space under oak trees for kitchen, 2 others for bedrolls and campfire. We see the entrance to canyon opposite Smith Fork. Since '45 I've called this *No Name Canyon*, though Dudy suggested we call it *Forgotten Canyon*. We make many trips to and from boat with gear and drag dead oak trees in for firewood. Dudy does most cooking in dutch oven: Pies, cakes, and biscuits. Good eats. As has been said, we're living kind of high on the hog."

OCT. 20 *"After breakfast, I clear space in* depression for Canyon Survey office, then in afternoon we go up *Forgotten Canyon*, leaving three melons in the stream, and carry laundry up for Dudy to do in a sunny place—heating water in a large bucket. Dick and I go up into narrows—the slot—and I wade into cold water up to my chest to where I see deeper water in the last pool. We look down canyon for a way up higher along ledge, but it seems impassable, though Dick did bring tools for cutting Moki steps.<sup>16</sup> We return to camp to Dudy, dog, and cat after looking at Moki ruins under overhang."



Forgotten Canyon

Batman in Glen Canyon



OCT. 21 "*After breakfast Dick and I take ropes*, tools and canteens up into Forgotten Canyon. We take equipment onto ledge and begin job of cutting traverse Moki steps on the same level we had spotted the ancient ones. With the aid of safety lines, and varying points for pins, at a 60+ degree angle, we cut a series of steps with stone facing tool and heavy hammer. Between cutting we climb down to rest. At last Dick gets across traverse with the line, anchoring it to boulder. We go along ledge to next junction where steps are on the other side. On the way back we see two places where we can anchor lines to work into main canyon. We return to camp and will rest tomorrow."

OCT. 22 "*Quite cool in camp before sunshine* strikes us near 9:30. To be comfortable at breakfast table while bringing notes up to date, I wear pajamas, plus U.S. Marine Corps wool shirt with down-insulated Woods Arctic Jacket." <sup>17</sup>

OCT. 23 "*After good breakfast, we fill two backpacks with equipment bag* for three day up into Forgotten Canyon. Dudy carrying camera bag, and lunch in a creel. Dick and I carry gear across our Moki-steps, and with a safety line, we take Dudy across. While outfit is carried to next roping point, I drag and swim with Pard using a long line thru the tanks and narrow canyon slot. He makes it up and with safety line Dudy makes the climb down, and lowers Mickey<sup>18</sup> in fish creel. We lower packs and three cameras and go to junction and take the right branch and then with line climb up steps into main canyon.

"A rope harness is fashioned in which to pull Pard up 35 feet onto bench. Mickey makes it up in a creel. We continue up canyon through rocky bottom and brush until Dick stops, looking into a high cave, saying, 'Look at that.' There are three large, white paintings of figures holding raised shields. Directly, I spot a cliff dwelling to the left of the paintings. We climb up talus slope to visit ruins. We see two rooms in complete condition and a kiva with a partial roof hole due to rock fall. Cross-log has decomposed, dropping one end to the floor.

"The ladder leans at top encircled by stringers. One rung hangs askew near bottom on one stringer. Floor is undisturbed, covered with sand and light wind-blown material. Many cobwebs. Rock deflector for fire pit is in place. Entrance to draft shaft is open—about a foot in diameter and is protected by two crossed sticks. It's complete to roof height. A large closing stone lies to one side. Roof entrance to kiva has been fitted with flat, carefully shaped thick blocks of sandstone.

"A few feet away stood a well-preserved Moki house, with a rounded southeast corner. Between the house and back wall was a well-built granary. Closing stones for its door lay in four pieces outside entrance. Near by, a broken metate. We see ruins of three other rooms with walls intact, some with faint red and white paintings. We also notice a mealing bin full of sand and a perfect mano and metate on a section of fallen retaining wall. Many shards about. Dick believes this is a virgin find with no signs of visitors since final abandonment.<sup>19</sup> We go half a mile up canyon to waterhole, gather wood for campfire while Dudy prepares dinner. We sleep deep."



Batman in Glen Canyon



OCT. 24 *Forever on the lookout for Moki houses*, Aleson and Sprang head out for the upper reaches of Forgotten Canyon. Dudy stays behind to begin digging into what is either a burial cist or a fire pit. At the end of the box-end canyon, they leave a written record of their passing in a glass container in small cairn, take pictures, and scratch their initials and date in a sheer wall. Then the Canyon Survey crew heads back to camp where, "after good dinner and campfire, to our night's rest."

OCT. 25 *After a good breakfast they dig to the bottom* of the carefully walled fire pit and conclude it is not a burial cist, but a roasting pit. In the tradition of the times, they carefully arrange all their tin cans in the shape of a "D" (for Dudy, Dick, and Dumb Norwegian). They refill the hole with sand, charcoal, and original stones, figuring it would be fun for some future digger to unearth. They break camp and return to the Moki house to take pictures and explore further. "Dick suggested we call it 'Three Warrior Ruin' for the three bold paintings. Let us hope that it will be called by this name."<sup>20</sup>

"I remove sand from a beautifully made mealing bin with its smoothly mortared joints. I lowered myself into the kiva. There were two alcoves in the wall opposite each other. When the kiva was last used, it is most probable that the ladder stood between the wall and fire deflector and leaned on the north edge of entrance. A heavy butt of stringer stood in the sand. Dry rot had caused both stringers to drop to the floor north of the deflector."



On the way back to the river, Dudy spots another Moki ruin in a high overhang. They scramble up the talus slope and discover nine undisturbed rooms and a kiva. The largest room and the kiva have roof timbers, saplings, and reeds in place. A fine mealing bin stands half exposed. "We pick up sample potsherds. Must investigate another time. Around next bend, Dudy is waiting. She's found another. I quickly climb up talus. Two fine granaries here. Also signs of bedding places, laid up rock. This is another place undisturbed by pot hunters."<sup>21</sup>

"We hurry on, Dudy in the lead again, trying to beat the sun down to camp. Time prevents our climbing up. About sunset we come to the Moki steps. Dick and Dudy make harness and lower Pard on safety line. Dick goes down with me on safety line. I shove Pard off the pitch and lower him down with a line to Dick. Packs are lowered. Then Mickey in a creel. I toss safety line down, and go down Moki steps.

"In deep dusk we come to long line. Dick climbs wall, taking safety line up. Packs and cameras are hauled up. About 10 feet up, the strap on the creel breaks and Mickey-in-creel rolls back to brush in canyon. Soon, Mickey is safely up.

"Pard and I go to narrow, deep tanks in the darkness. Dick encouraging him from 40 feet above. I return in darkness by the light of a new moon reflected from high wall, and help Dudy traverse Moki steps. We get all equipment across and move slowly down canyon, reaching base camp at about 7:30. Then a good dinner."

OCT. 26 *Our intrepid explorers rest*, loaf, eat and drink.

OCT. 27 *The Canyon Survey team may have hangovers*, and only able to retrieve tools from their Moki step retrofit job. They leave a note in a "quart-size Canada Dry bottle," place it in a niche in the slickrock, and wander back to camp where they read, rested, ate, talked, and "packed many loads to boats for tomorrow's departure."<sup>22</sup>

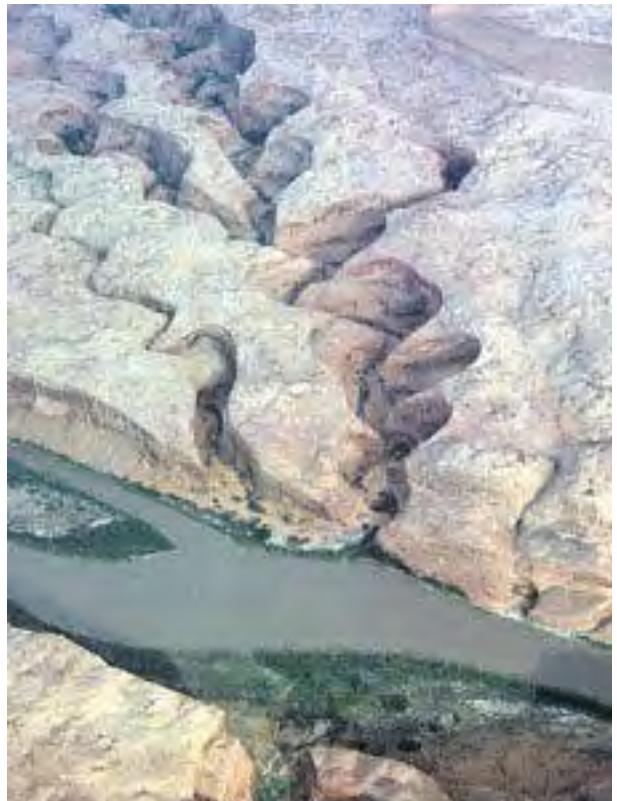
OCT. 28 *The party broke camp and* crossed the river to Smith Fork Bar;<sup>23</sup> hiked in to photograph and make movies of the petroglyph panel; continued down river to the California Bar<sup>24</sup> to the ruins of Kimball



*Smith Fork Petroglyph panel.*



*Aleson in the steps of the Moki.*



*Smith Fork and Forgotten Canyon, Mile 132.*



and Turner's <sup>25</sup> two-room cobblestone house; then proceeded to Alonzo Long Turner's grave, for which Art Chaffin cast a cement block headstone. The surrounding fence was built of light water pipe. Aleson may have felt uneasy recalling that Kindall's body, who died in 1926, was transported to Hanksville where the ladies stayed up all night and kept his body cool and wet for the funeral the next day. At Hansen Creek Bar, they gathered wood, selected a spot for Joe Moser's air drop the following day, and in the sand shoveled in large letters "OK." They returned to camp after dark for cocktails, conversation, and another of Dudy's scrumptious meals.

OCT. 29 *The expedition party was up early*, after breakfast they hike to Hansen Creek Bar. Through binoculars, Dudy spottet a plane near the Navajo Mountain area that was scouting the channel intensely for their boats and identification signs. The plane comes into view again and Sprang and Aleson both flash it with U.S. Navy signal mirrors. Moser flies in low, droped three parcels and three boxes of Cracker Jacks, then turned back north up river and flew back to Hite, or possibly White Canyon, to refuel. Aleson makes a dash for packages, concerned that his crème de cacao—dropped from 100 feet—was not broken. Ripping open the package wrapped in a foam rubber, cork, and paper carton, he's relieved that the bottle is intact. He takes a long drink.

Sprang, with civilized sensibilities, waited to mix his drink with 7-Up. Overcome with gratitude for the air drop, Harry carries "two loads of 'special rocks'" to the river's edge for bookends as a gift to pilot Joe Moser. They gorge themselves on fresh food at the mouth of Hansen Creek. "We have a pleasant afternoon up Hansen Creek about 2½ miles, a beautiful and large side canyon." Upon returning, they gathered a large pile of oak for a campfire, pass the bottle around, and talk late into the night.

OCT. 30 *"After bacon, eggs, hot cakes, and coffee we break camp and drift to left bank mile 127.25 and dig for an hour or so in a cut-away high river bank for arrow points. Dick found a complete one and several broken ones. A half mile down river*

*Joe Moser and Aleson go over details for air-drop.*

we stop and chip away painted sign from last year. We make a comfortable camp for Dudy above Moki Creek, then hike up Lake Canyon, across slickrock, then back via Moki Canyon.

OCT. 31 "*Much of the day given to* clearing away for camp—brushing trails, gathering firewood, unloading boats, etc. Tent was well-set; bedding aired. Dick cuts wood. Dudy makes fudge.

NOV. 1 "*On a boulder Dick finds* an inscription date of 1904. Yesterday I found a single date 1886 without name. Who inscribed these dates? Today, Dudy does a big wash. I carry 10 loads of oak saplings for fire. Dick makes pix, reorganizes boatload. Dudy reads most of P.M. Dick brings in armloads of chopped wood while I bring notes up to date. Tonight, our usual delicious meal. From one large dutch oven, we had 2 whole spring chickens, baked mashed potatoes, edged with chicken broth." Aleson made a startling Canyon Survey discovery that "the canned chicken serving of 1952 cost about \$2.06 per person. Off the gas stove came chicken gravy, carrots, and peas. "We have cranberry sauce on the side, followed by Dudy's specialty, a pan of dutch oven biscuits (hot) with honey and coffee. We begin packing for hike up Lake Canyon, then back to Moki Canyon to camp."

NOV. 2 *Sprang and Aleson leave Dudy*, dog, and cat for three days. Departing at 8:00 A.M. in the Mai Bee, they switch off rowing and make 12 miles to Lake Canyon by 11:15. "A few hundred yards up canyon, we pass the largest waterfall in the canyon at 40 feet, and soon arrive at a perfect Moki house.<sup>26</sup>

It has 4 rooms, walls complete, roof timbers and saplings in place—reeds and mud walls are nearly as perfect as when they were built. Three hand-laid mortared rock walls and cliff face form a rectangular room 7 x 9 feet. Ceiling height permits a short person to stand upright. The room is nearly covered entirely by soot. Doorway is at back, close to cliff face, a foot wide, two feet high and two feet off ground level. At one time this may have been the connected entrance to adjoining room of which partial walls up to four feet high remain. A foot-square window overlooks the creek some 50 feet below.

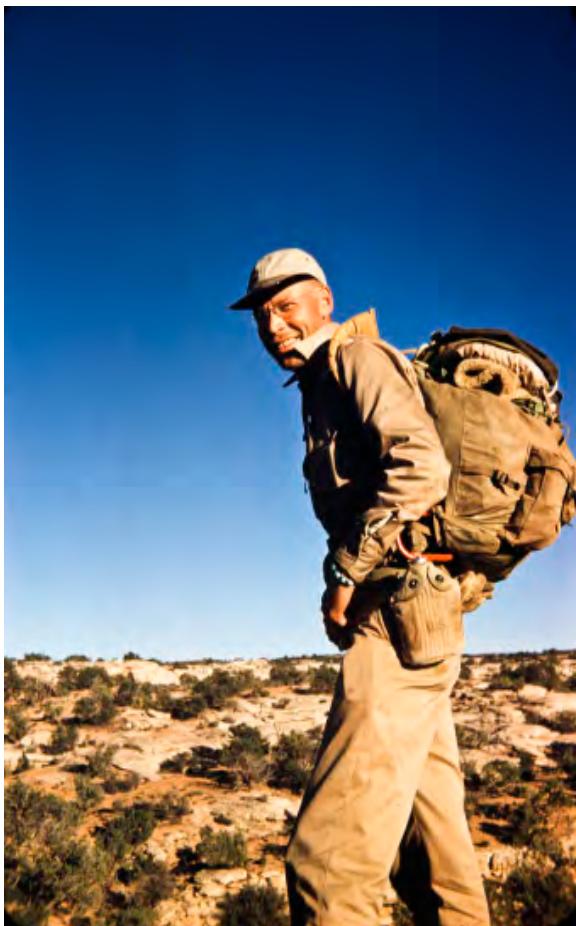
Ventilating hole is directly above window, and partially below unexcavated floor. Above is the smoke-escape hole, about 18 x 18 inches. Roof is smooth solid clay. On the two stream-side corners of roof, large piles of rocks have been placed, possibly for defensive purposes, with peepholes and/or arrow-shooting holes. In an overhang not far from the cliff-dweller site are white life-size pornographic paintings of men and women. In addition we see a few others, also depicted in white pigment, dim with age. We leave and pass a high cave on



*Moki Canyon, mile 125.*



Aleson in Wasp House.



Heading for the Great Beyond.

"We pass many granaries and eventually arrive at a touch point—probably a point of no return—it is a jump-off. We set a 15-foot pole to aid in possible climb back. I go over 6-foot jump-off with backpack and slide 20 feet down steep, loose sand, and jump sideways at vertical sheer wall to avoid following sand. I now find myself between two falls with the only way out to climb up cleft in upstream sand bank through which I worm up.

Dick tosses the twenty-foot pole into gully. He goes to jump off with camera and pack on, goes over and down in a cloud of dust, comes out coughing. He works thru brush in gully—brings pole. I wedge in cleft, bracing top of pole, while Dick, with pack on, worms up between the wall and pole. I go down cleft, get my pack and camera and Dick's, then worm up thru cleft while Dick holds pole."

It was late afternoon, so after going down off a second sand bank, they decided to camp in a circular depression under a cottonwood. Fire blazed, lightning flashed, and thunder resonated off canyon walls. They didn't seem to care that they had camped in the path of a possible flash flood. So what if they had no tents? So what if they may have been in a jam from which they couldn't escape? Aleson wrote, "Rain is pleasant to have falling on one's face while storm moves northward."

NOV. 3 *Sprang and Aleson were up by* 6:30 after a restful night. By 8:00, with breakfast over, they were on their way to Moki Canyon. They crossed Lake Canyon Creek, picked up a quart of water each for the day (!), and climbed over slickrock on the right bank up an old Indian trail to the rim. There they beheld a timeless landscape of incomprehensible spaces that rattled the senses. A gaudy display of color and light and shadow spread in every direction, dwarfing their ephemeral passing; every shade and hue of color in the world exploded against a backdrop of infinity—especially when Navajo Mountain loomed before them with its arched craggy backbone and the maze of intricate canyons cascading off its pine-covered summit.

Off to the southeast end of the Kaiparowitz plateau, they viewed deeply dissected canyons, cut by tributaries of the Colorado River where once the horned dinosaur ceratopsid roamed. They saw portions of the Waterpocket Fold, a hundred-mile-long wrinkle in the earth's crust, and the five peaks of the Henry Mountains, rising from the desert floor like giant whalebacks, formed by the welling up of massive volumes of molten rock.

Sprang and Aleson tried to take still photos and movies, even though it was impossible to capture such immensity. Harry had the "privilege," of setting the course to Moki Canyon "by guess," as a insect might try to navigate on Mars."



*An unfathomable slickrock wilderness challenged their sense of time and reality.*

"I estimate thus," writes Harry, "The sun rose about there; by 8:30 it has gone so far. [sic] East is about there; so 15 degrees left gives me the course I want, i.e. N 75 E." With an old an old U.S. Army Corps of Engineers compass, they determined the magnetic north (true course) to be just right of Aleson's guess.<sup>28</sup> They sight off the highest point of the S.E. part of the Waterpocket Fold, and begin marching over much slickrock, through a land of Hoodoos, many sand bowls, some dunes, and passing hundreds of small potholes with the previous nights rain. Occasionally they stop to check stereos.<sup>29</sup>

"After enjoying the gorgeous views, sitting on warm sand dune with a slight breeze, and completing lunch, we go down gentle slope about a quarter mile and come to the head of box canyon, drop our packs, and search for a possible trail into canyon." They found an old stock trail, built a cairn, and carved a Canyon Survey symbol in the rock. "Sunlight moves slowly in majestic sweep across canyon, highlighting our pictures." They located many Moki houses while searching for route down "huge sand slide" where they hoped to enter Moki Canyon. Locating it, they began descending the massive 2/3 mile long dune that gently sloped from the rim, and became steep towards the bottom of the Canyon. "By dusk we have gathered wood for night. Dinner is cooked and enjoyed on our second backpacking day. We talk of many things until wood runs low."



Batman in Glen Canyon



NOV. 4 *After a cold night, they began to* explore Moki Canyon. After about an hour, "we drop packs and climb up to the Cliff Dwellings we had seen yesterday. Here we find a beautiful granary at East end, and much interesting pottery shards. On a lower ledge I find a perfect arrow point about 2 inches long—burnt umber shade. Dick takes many pictures, and I complete another 16mm, 100-ft roll, the end of my supply. I write a record of our visit from the Colorado River, sign it, and leave it in a cylindrical olive bottle. Beside the bottle, I place a portion of a sandal I found inside the dwelling. There was no sign that 'white man' has ever been here. No shards disturbed, no inscriptions. This may have been a virgin visit." <sup>30</sup>

"Downstream we hike, hoping to reach the Colorado late today. In a sunny spot we make coffee, heat beans." High in a Moki cave, Harry spotted a bold anthropomorph, painted in white pigment, and lamented that there was no time to explore the ruin beneath the overhang or the many other sites they passed that day. "Hope to give more time here in 1954. We work our way around two waterfalls, and in dusk, over a boulder and log jam. A mile from the Colorado and in darkness we pass below a Moki house, high in an overhang. Dick lets out a yell. Dudy replies. In dense brush we break out a flashlight. Dudy, dog, and cat met us with Coleman lantern. She had been expecting us per planned schedule. What a grand dinner she has prepared, with dutch oven cooked dessert of pie and cake!"

NOV. 5 "*A peaceful day for* resting and relaxing in camp: notes, reading, and eating."

NOV. 6 *For some time, Aleson had been* mulling over author Herbert Gregory's claim in *San Juan Country* that the massive wall at the junction of Moki Canyon and the Colorado was 1,600 feet high. On this morning he began to brush a long straight line in the sand that would be the baseline for determining the wall's height. "By testing with an old U.S. Army compass, Dick and I decide upon the possibility that by sighting through the notches at the top of the folding sighting arms, with the measurement level, we will obtain a vertical sight of 45 degrees... By laying a small spirit level [sic] atop the compass, we have a quite critical transit." <sup>31</sup>

The mathematical conclusion drawn by *Canyon Surveys*, is that the wall was 540 feet in height, and not the 1,600 plus feet as was previously believed by Gregory. To set the record straight, Aleson wrote, "The U.S.G.S. 1921 plan map of wall gives topography elevation at top at 3900 ft and at the mouth of Moki Creek, 3360 Ft.



Looking around the mouth of Moki Canyon for other mysteries to solve, Aleson found a few tin cans "center-hole soldered, and the top 7 or 8 inches of a shovel handle that had been cut off with a knife," and assumed they were the remains of "Judd's camp of 1929."<sup>32</sup> Very pleasant evening in Dudy's tent until Dick and I are invited to leave...

NOV. 7 *The Canyon Surveys party was now 125 miles above* old Lee's Ferry... "Quite cold last night. Heavy frost over bar in a.m. and over bed tarps and around our sleeping bag nose holes. Dick manages to get all five of us on his boat with luggage and rows down to Lake Canyon to the *Mai Bee*." Next stop, Mile 123 to visit the ruins of Stanton's camp.<sup>33</sup>



Batman in Glen Canyon

"All that remains is a sturdy rock fireplace and chimney, and a few runners that supported the floor. I stroll down the bar toward the location of the workmen's camp, and to where Chaffin and Bennett had their trading post to the Navajos in the early 1900s, while Arthur L. (Arth) Chaffin<sup>34</sup> was caretaker of the dredge and camp for Stanton."

Aleson discovered a 1" x 5" dented tube with rusted lid containing French Satin Jr. blueprint paper manufactured in Denver, Colorado, by J.C. Millen M.D. The container noted, "We guarantee the contents of this package to be free of all defects, and if found defective upon first opening, we will replace goods." A rubber stamp imprint indicated that "this guarantee expires Aug. 1, 1901."

The old Navajo continued to insist on liquor, so Arth offered him the jug. Splurting and gagging vinegar, the Navajo never again asked for liquor."

Aleson considered this find as significant as the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and wasted no time compiling information for Canyon Surveys. "We first opened this 'hermetically sealed' can on Nov. 7, 1952. We considered writing J.C. Millen, M.D.<sup>35</sup> Manufacturing Chemist for a replacement of fresh stock, IF a coyote or other varmint hadn't gnawed holes that let light and moisture into can, and IF we could fulfill the request to forward a sample piece of paper. Even so, I sign and date the guarantee slip 'First opened Nov. 7, 1952, HLA.'" Aleson left the rusted can on a head-high ledge of the stone fireplace, upstream side, with a note: "Go get it, if you want it."

We found no sign here of the Arth Chaffin and Bennett Trading Post. The year I met him in 1945, he told me a story of how the Navajos, coming to trade, wanted liquor. Arth didn't have any, and to prove it he stooped at the far end of the counter, and partly out of view filled a gallon jug. The old Navajo continued to insist on liquor, so Arth offered him the jug. Splurting and gagging vinegar, the Navajo never again asked for liquor."



*The river ground Stanton's quixotic gold mining operation into the silt along with his dreams of wealth.*

Canyon Surveys continued their research into the brush surrounding the workmen's camp, discovering hundreds of tin cans and odds and ends not wanted by miners, scavengers, or souvenir hunters. Since Aleson's 1948 visit, brush fires set by stockmen hoping for better grazing had reduced to ash the remnants of the old workmen's camp, which had included screened-wall food storage and a kitchen and mess tent. Under the edge of a boulder and out of the weather were many sticks of dynamite and signs of target practicing. An enterprising fellow had shot his initials high into a sandstone wall in 1881.

"After the final operation and breakdown of Stanton's dredge, it was tied up near mile 121.5. Over the years the river at lower levels formed a channel around it and the dredge remained on an island until spring flood-water completely buried it. Canyon Surveys passed the 60-foot mangled mass of buckets, chains, tracks, hopper, and meshed rotor. The barge had listed as the Colorado River was intent on burying it in sand—just as it had Stanton's dreams. They tied up to parts of the dredge to take survey notes.

At a small canyon just down river at mile 121.4, Mokis or Pah Utes once chipped arrow points, and Stanton's crew used a forge fired by coal. They inspected a perfect Moki granary, unearthed a perfect stone drill, and saw the long line of Moki steps possibly deepened by whiteman's wanderings.

"We go up the old dugway to top of canyon wall, blasted by Charlie Gibbon's road-building crew for lowering the wagon-loads of dredge sections shipped by rail to Green River, Utah, thence to Hanksville and over the road between the Henry Mountains.<sup>36</sup> On down to the river, over Bullfrog riffle and into camp at old Hall's crossing. Another delicious dinner by Dudy, by doody."



*Aleson takes notes along built-up section of Stanton's road.*

NOV. 8 "After breakfast and chores, the five of us hike along beautiful tapestry-wall and see a few old inscriptions and exceptionally fine petroglyphs." At a sheer wall of Moki steps, Sprang and Aleson continued alone up slickrock and dugway near mile 120.2, where pioneers traveled by wagon between Salt Lake and Bluff until the following year when Dandy Crossing was used.



"Dick and I hike southeastward to the north end of high Navajo dome, and show him a cairn I placed last year. With a pocket knife, I cut the Canyon Surveys symbol, an arrow pointed upward with the letters C and S." <sup>37</sup>

NOV. 9 *Directly after breakfast on this cold morning*, Aleson returned to the sheer wall and copied inscriptions of whiteman visits: "L A F B Broke Campown March 26, 1889 ; J A Livengood Jan 19, 1886; F A B Jan. 19, 1886; and three initials surrounded by a diamond shape, possibly young stockmen riding for Al Scorup." <sup>38</sup> They broke camp, piled into Dick's boat, and in early afternoon landed above Lake Canyon alongside the boat Aleson had left on November 2. Using axe, rake, and shovel, they cleared brush and willows for a comfortable camp spot out of the wind—space for kitchen table, dining table, campfire, and bedrolls.

Aleson located a "snug sleeping place" in an old Moki room under a ledge above the bar. "Sitting around an oak campfire in a circle in officer-style chairs makes for pleasant companionship. I am always the last one up. Going to bed to read by Coleman gas lantern."

NOV. 10 *After another good breakfast*—"We still have eggs from before Oct. 7"—Dick, Dudy and Pard went up Lake Canyon for the day to photograph a perfect Moki house Aleson had plans and stayed at camp with Mickey the cat. It may be that he received messages from the Moki instructing him to cache magazines in caves along the river. At any rate,

for "posterity" he made "a careful record of names and dates of several hundred newspapers and magazines" and placed them in a crack under an overhang. He washed clothes and "soaps up and bathes in the river, which is colder than a brass monkey's... what a frost last night! Everyone back by sundown. I have cut dead saplings for fire.

NOV. 11 *"We have an easy day in camp.* Dick and I cut more dead oak. I go some distance upstream to top of talus slope hoping to find an early-day Spanish or French inscription, similar to undeciphered 'Isance 1887' located on ledge across the river from Lake Canyon. Another marvelous camp dinner and evening.





*Paradise*

NOV. 12 *In loaded boats, they drifted down the shallows.* "Pass inscription dates, 1837, 1896, 1642. Will explore further next year. We land in a narrow channel, right bank, mile 111.3. Dudy hunts for arrow points, and Dick and I go up into Moki house cave opposite our landing that I hadn't noticed, having always taken main channel. "Dick made several pixs here. A well-cut stock trail comes down off of Navajo near mile 111.5. We go down to bar for a drink ... meet Dudy for lunch. Little warmth from sun. At mile 110.5 was a 3-ft.-diameter cast-iron gear wheel, leaning against slickrock."

Aleson landed just below a "10-man Neoprene," still afloat, that he "left there" September 28. "While Dick adds air to main and cross tubes, I carry all equipment from tamarisk-hidden cache, located 100 feet up river. All was well protected under a tarp. I lashed second boat stern-to-stern to my No. 1 boat. Maneuvering 32 feet of loaded boats with one pair of oars is a sluggish business. Only 110 miles to go. Unable to check on gas drums on Gretchen Claim on Old Dr. Schock Bar mile 108.2 for Arth Chaffin. Dick believes he sees a large letter C on left bank mile 107 that Dave Rust told Chaffin he painted to indicate Chaffin Bar.



*Sprang helps Aleson pump up 10-man boat #2 hidden in brush.*

Batman in Glen Canyon



*Aleson incognito.*

"We make camp at mile 100.6. We brush trail to a high dry bar among saplings and carry minimum of outfit up to camp. Excellent dinner by Dudy. Cold nights, but quite comfortable around our pit fires. This was the second night of sweet music on our portable Philco radio,<sup>39</sup> retrieved from boat No. 2.

Also heard some of the conglomergut [sic] called News of the World. It matters little out here, especially to anyone who likes to live above all of it—the freedoms from this, the freedoms from that, the freedom from Fear—much trumped-up panaceas in the politically screwed up world. Last night was the first news of the outcome of the Nov. 4 national election choosing General Eisenhower & Senator Nixon as top men—'Just what we wanted'—which will on Jan. 4 eliminate the long-time member of the 'Pendergast Gang,'<sup>40</sup> that upstart S.O.B. Harry S. Truman, the U.S. Necktie Salesman and Skru-Dealer in an otherwise grand country. Enough!

The "news" matters little out here, especially to anyone who likes to live above all of it—the freedoms from this, the freedoms from that, the freedom from Fear—much trumped-up panaceas in the politically screwed up world.

NOV. 13 ***"While Dudy keep the campfire burning,*** Dick and I hike up to photograph Flying Eagle Bridge, a spectacularly beautiful natural bridge.<sup>41</sup> We go up canyon L.B. mile 100.7, around on talus and benches. We leave a register book twenty feet away in a metal case, in a niche of a large rock." They scrawled their names and etched the Canyon Survey symbol.

"We go west and south to high rim for view and pic of the Rincon—a dramatic entrenched meander. We set skyline marker slab to mark with binoculars from camp. Dudy has enjoyed the day roaming for points. I find scattered pieces of huge pot. Good dinner—campfire—music."

NOV. 14 ***Pilot Joe Moser, with wife Donnie, roared up the river*** a day early. The Canyon Survey party placed identification on boats and flashed the plane with a signal mirror. Joe waggled the wings, mainly concerned that no calamity had befallen the river runners. They laid out an X with toilet paper to assist in the airdrop consisting of items vital to the continuation of Canyon Surveys, including "three boxes of Cracker Jacks ... Ringer! One box lands directly in the cockpit on my boat." The Mosers circled, saluted, and flew on;



*View of San Juan River, and up canyon 1.5 miles above confluence with the Colorado River.*

Aleson continued onward toward Bennett's old camp at Oil Seep Bar to pick up a "fine old cast-iron stove for Dudy. I will carry it in my #2 boat to Lees Ferry. It was here the Purtymun party<sup>42</sup> overtook them. "We drift and visit and give them a box of marshmallows we had carried through the Grand Canyon." They soon lashed three boats side by side, started the outboard motor, and headed downstream for the Hole in the Rock register.<sup>43</sup> "We drift as we lunch ... A storm front is came in over us. It's chilly, near snow. I stop above the confluence with the Escalante River and load much driftwood onto boat #2 for a stormy night. From my private register bottle I copy records..." (This is Aleson's twenty-sixth visit in eight years, in addition to eight flyovers.)

Before a gusty, strong dust storm hits us, and before darkness, Dick cleared a sheltered bedding place among tamarisk. In gas lantern light, Dudy tries to cook dinner in lee of lower silt bar." Eventually they moved the kitchen into the bedroom and out of the wind, dust, and silt. "My night reading is very short."

NOV. 15 "**Quite a night! Cloudy chilly day**—tamarisk and dust cover our tarps." They were held in camp until cold upriver wind and waves subsided. Finally, they broke camp and headed for the San Juan and the Colorado Rivers. En route, Aleson checked Hole in the Rock Register, 44 noting that a few days earlier a



*Elmer Purtymun*

USGS party had camped there and one man had tried to paddle across the river in a rubber raft, barely getting back to be with his party on right bank. Aleson notes, "Let us hope these 'pioneers' never learn that in June 1946, Georgie White and HLA rode the last 81 miles of lower Grand Canyon in a one-man U.S. Army Air Corps life raft."

Aleson's companions stopped to inspect the old Stanton railroad grade. Aleson noted: "Built to hold franchise, this is a well-built, graded, hand-laid and buttressed embankment above flood-line, constructed by Engr Stanton, R.B. from near mile 83.4, and is a continuation of the wagon road built by the 1879–1880 Hole in the Rock Mormon pioneers. The mile-long road continues from the mouth of Hole in the Rock Creek to mile 84.

"We lash boats together and drift as we lunch, and row continuously into p.m. landing L.B. mile 78.2 for camp #14. We clear, level, and set tarp for storm camp. I clear a place for my bedroll under overhang and shelter of old arrow point maker. My bed is half exposed to the sky. We gather driftwood along bank. Have a good, brushed trail onto bar. And gather driftwood along bank for fire.

NOV. 16 *"Heard this a. m. that Dick had quite a siege of maneuvering into his sleeping bag last night, beneath a low-slung, heavy tarp. Dudy can tell you the episode. Pard was a smart dog and came up to share my shallow cave while I was reading. Today it's cold and windy so set up Dick's Abercrombie tent where big tarp had been, then cut and set tamarisk and willow boughs, and built a rock wall under huge boulder that was once an Indian bedding site.*

"Dudy managed very well arranging the 9 x 9 floor space using the sleeping bags as seats; the gas stove and kitchen; a place for Pard's blanket. Now very snug with stove heat for reading on a cold, windy, frost-bitten night, with good music from "The Standard Symphony Hour" broadcast from San Francisco, and good Mexican music. Every night around our pleasant campfires, Mickey, the cat—my alley-bastard friend—has spent much of his time upon my lap. Every night he goes to bed with Dudy, his head beside hers sticking out of her sleeping bag, one paw on her hair, breathing in her ear. The lucky bastard! Pard, the gentlemen's dog, is always ready for his blanket where he snuggles down beside his master's sleeping bag. Some nights I read from Albert R. Lyman's book *The Voice of the Intangible*, placed in my care by Dave Rust<sup>44</sup> last September. Tomorrow we hope to hike up over rim.



NOV. 17 “All very snug and comfortable last night. For some time, Dick has wanted to search for any signs of Everett Ruess’s possible passing thru the area nearest the acute section of the confluence of the San Juan and the Colorado River. We leave midday going down bar to confluence. Here we find painted in white ‘USGS BM 3285.8’ and a faint inscription that begins ‘ESTU... Jan 1886’—possibly an old Spanish inscription? We start up the San Juan atop lowest talus, then follow along ledge, holding our balance with hands, our heels toward the San Juan, up and over more talus, then down ledges to silt flat, and walk gingerly across some 400 feet of wet quicksand, slightly above river level.

Half a mile from Colorado, we go up a gully to gain Kayenta Bench. We are now in an old abandoned meander of the Colorado, plainly visible in aerial stereos. Dick makes stills over river junction. About a mile from the Colorado, we locate a natural bridge reported by Miser of the San Juan River Plan & Profile Survey. It hangs on the rim of a low ledge, having formed in a hanging valley when the ceiling of the arch broke through. Sprang may have been the first to photograph it. We cut the Canyon Surveys symbol and our initials.”

Baffled by a series of cairns all in a straight line that he discounted as a “stock fence,” Aleson hallucinated, comparing the small rock piles to “small idols” similar to those described by Lyman in “When the Idols Move,” the last chapter of *Intangible*.<sup>45</sup> Once grounded, he noted that he was standing in piles of chippings in a Moki camp, and he picked up a long point for his private collection. A skyline silver bridge on a graceful arch atop Navajo slickrock beckoned, but the sheer walls of the Colorado prevented them from climbing to the bridge that day. At a narrow point near mile 79, Aleson scratched in the wall for another visitor “WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?”<sup>46</sup>

They followed the Kayenta bench to above camp and called down to Dudy, saying they might need a line thrown up soon. From a point directly above the rivers’ junction, they noted an inscription: “Bernheimer Expedition June 8 1929.”<sup>47</sup> They were able to make a descent in a notch “a few yards up Colorado side,” where they feasted on “delicious Roast Beef (Uruguay) gravy spaghetti with blackberry jelly on muffins, cake and coffee, tea.” Aleson had gone “shopping” the day before from “an old cache of mine” and surprised the survey crew by bringing into camp “2 lbs MJB coffee, can of malted milk powder, a variety of tea bags, and ice cream pudding.”

Batman in Glen Canyon

NOV. 18 *"In further search for trace of Ruess,* and to visit graceful silver bridge, Dick and I use another day here. This means 78 miles of rowing in four days, plus abandoning our going to Rainbow Bridge to note [Norman] Nevills' records for Dock Marston." Unable to get on top of the Navajo Sandstone formation, they followed an old stock trail for three miles from camp looking for signs of Ruess. "We found an inscription X I L recognized by Dick as an old Texas brand." At the narrowest point along the ledge, another row of cairns stopped Aleson in his tracks. Visions consumed him. He speculated they were "Prayer Cairns" like he had seen in Navajo land. As always, they passed through campsites covered with chippings and potsherds. "We decide the surest way into Navaho and into Rainbow Bridge, is from Hole in the Rock Trail, from the north." They place a variety of colored stones at the confluence and sign the register. "Good dinner and to bed soon after 9 p.m."

NOV. 19 *"Broke camp. Dick left record cut on Wingate Block* of our camp. We begin four days of rowing. While Dick and Dudy stop at Hidden Passage, I visit Music Temple and left record in register. We stop at Forbidden Canyon, then row on to below Rock Creek for camp, mile 55.5. Made a short trip to Dick and Dudy's permanent register." At mile 39.4, the exhausted party row by the "Crossing of the Fathers." <sup>48</sup>

NOV. 20–23 *After three days of nearly continuous rowing,* Canyon Surveys arrived at Lees Ferry at 3:11, unloaded the boats, and spent the night at Cliff Dwellers Lodge where they no doubt luxuriated with hot baths and dinner. The next morning they "deflate boats, load trucks as snow flurries hit us."

\* \* \*

# Notes

[1] Richard W. (Dick) Sprang (July 28, 1915–May 10, 2000) was born in Fremont, Ohio. He moved to New York City in 1936 and began his career illustrating pulp, Western, detective, and adventure magazines, and in 1938 he wrote for the Lone Ranger radio series. With the pulp magazine in decline, Sprang submitted his work to editor Whitney Ellsworth of DC Comics in 1941, who assigned him a Batman story. Anticipating that Bob Kane—who was at the time the primary artist for Batman—would be drafted into service during WWII, DC inventoried Sprang's work against delays. Though he was the primary artist for the character for nearly twenty years, he never signed his name to his work, nor was he given credit due to a clause in Kane's contract. In 1955 Sprang was main artist for *World's Finest Comics* and began drawing Superman until he retired in 1963. He moved to Sedona, Arizona, in 1946 and became an expert in the field of pioneer trails and Colorado River history. He remained uncredited and unknown until he began making reproductions of his cover art; in 1992 he received an Inkspot Award, and in 1999 he was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame. He lived in Prescott, Arizona, from 1971 until his death.

[2] In Aleson's journal "Lone Month on the Colorado in Glen Canyon September-October 1950," we learn straightaway that this was no ordinary river trip. Aleson unloaded his boat and equipment and sat down in the sand with six boxes of magazines and papers collected from the previous five years "to be hidden in FARAWAY, Utah, for some future finder." His insatiable curiosity deciphering inscriptions and discovering artifacts, both past and present, left by those who once lived on or traveled the Colorado River seemed at times a feverish obsession. Born several hundred years too late for "real" adventures, he still craved to be where no "whiteman" had been.

To that end, Aleson crisscrossed the vast slickrock wilderness of the Colorado Plateau for some eight years, especially the Glen Canyon region. We have no idea what strange currents moved him on this particular solitary journey, any more than we know why he chose to swim eighty-six miles of the Colorado River at flood stage, or why on the Escalante River, he dragged his boat for nearly a hundred miles to the confluence of the Colorado, never taking an oar stroke because the river was so low.

As Harry organized magazines and papers, he may have wondered if this would be the trip when he would solve the mystery of Everett Ruess's disappearance, or come to terms with the United States government that he detested, or indeed if he would discover Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's mythical Seven Cities of Gold.

Wherever Aleson went he built cairns, left messages in bottles, built gigantic piles rocks forming an A, and scratched

his name and the date on canyon walls. To liven up his lonely evenings, and perhaps to ground himself, he tuned his trusty Philco radio to KSVC to listen to "Sunset Serenade" or to hear an ad for Larabee and Aleson Western River Tours, a company he formed to compete with Norm Nevills.

The first day out, Aleson encountered a lonely goat and wrote in detail of their relationship as they bleated to one another from boat to shore. The romance ended when Aleson was leaving camp and the goat insisted on joining him. Well-known as a trickster and clown, Aleson writes, "I jumped at him, and immediately he reared up on hind feet, shaking head. He stood two feet higher than me. I ducked back in the boat, pronto. I tossed rocks, but he was so agile that no stones touched him."

Two weeks out, Aleson spent the day "checking over 100 pounds papers and magazines to be cached away in cave." On October 6 he paused for a few days, camped at the confluence of the Colorado and Escalante Rivers. He had a vision. He dashed to a high ledge, wrote a note, and put it in a bottle: "Perhaps no one will visit here in 100 years after war between Communism and Democracy of the United Nations. [sic] Have people learned to be honest with each other? Signed Harry Aleson." Then not far from camp, he constructed a five-foot-high "A" from sandstone, stepped back and admired his work, took a bath and washed his clothes in the Escalante, listened to Sam Hays report the news, and called it a day. Life was good for Harry. But the next day, an apparition appeared. Everett Ruess called. Aleson dashed up the Escalante to a cave at the mouth of Clear Creek to "check on tattered Mackinaw with pot shards in pocket that I found and hid in '48. Could it have belonged to Everett Ruess?" He may have communed with Ruess's spirit, though he didn't mention it. On to Davis Canyon where he picked up four cans of food from caches of 1948 and 1949 and ate a can of grapefruit. Two days and 26 miles later, Aleson stumbled into camp exhausted, having had only a dozen graham crackers and water that day. On October 13 at mile 67.8, he recalled the discovery there of "a femur of a whiteman of 21. Did Everett Ruess's skeleton wash out of Navaho Valley from 50 Mile Mountain?" Next morning Aleson "temporarily cached away all magazines and papers in a rock shelter. Can move them later to FARAWAY, Utah." Awaiting a sign he paces... At last, with a 100 pound load on his back Aleson hikes a mile to FARAWAY cave where he deposits magazines, "a surprise gift, and dated record in glass jar."

An October 6 radio broadcast prompted an anti-government diatribe not infrequent in Aleson's writing: "Last night radio news told of news of Gen. MacArthur flying back to Japan from Wake Island, and the egotistical dope Truman flying back to San Francisco.... Perhaps the news does capture the

questionable imagination of the reading public for a short time. But it is soon as dead as yesterday's newspaper. And the cost to dupe taxpayers? Perhaps a dozen naval vessels and planes with thousands of men were needed to cross the Pacific to Wake Island. Now the duped taxpayers must pay the equivalent of what it would cost to run several of our city governments for years. This 60-minute palaver between "the General" and "the Dope" might have been done by diplomatic pouch (a receptacle for missions that can't be inspected) or even plain sealed envelopes. Anyway, what's the difference—they are constantly printing cheaper and cheaper money. Cost for this river boatman on solo trip runs about 60 cents per day—or \$18 for 31 days.

I dare say this trip has done more toward the search for peace for men in the future, proportionally, than Truman the dope will achieve thru stirring the war pot to boil the potage known as elusive peace!" Mission accomplished, Aleson landed at Old Lees Ferry on October 17, wrestled a 10-man boat up a sand slope, wandered near Spencer's sunken steamboat, and spent the night with visitations from angels and demons.

[3] Gustave Doré (January 6, 1832 – January 23, 1883) was a world-renowned French artist, engraver, illustrator, and sculptor. He is best known for illustrating Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

[4] Albert Bierstadt (January 7, 1830 – February 18, 1902) was a German-American artist of the Hudson River School known for his sweeping landscapes of the American West. His carefully detailed work, with its glowing light, romanticized the West and was partly responsible for its settling, as Easterners for the first time viewed its grandeur. Bierstadt is often grouped with Thomas Moran and the Rocky Mountain School of artists.

[5] A Sierra Club book first published in 1963 by master wilderness photographer Eliot Porter. His stunning plates continue to visually excite with breathtaking power, revealing images of the Colorado River, its towering walls, royal arches, alcoves, and monuments in their many moods of light, shadow, and tinted hue, complemented by quotes by Thoreau, Wallace Stegner, Loren Eiseley and others. In addition, it remains a tour de force publication and a spur to wilderness preservation.

[6] As a child in the 1950s, the author spent summers visiting his uncle and aunt, Dick and his wife at the time, Elizabeth Sprang, in southeastern Utah at Ripple Rock Ranch in what was then Capitol Reef National Monument. In the corner of Uncle Dick's studio, a stack of Batman and Superman comic books beckoned, piled as high as my young self. I was unable to grasp the depth or complexities of the man. He later wrote, "What used to drive my shrink up the wall was that I proposed and believed that Man's goal should be perfection and progression of humanitarian justice to himself and his environment. Great goal the shrink believed, but I tried to apply it too much in my personal life, inevitably losing and

damaging in the process my own mental and emotional well being. I advocated the goal because I knew man was an idiot and has no hope, and my inclination was always to fight for lost causes."

[7] Though Sprang designed yellow sheets of paper for half-mile descriptions, the following is transcribed from original journal entries and is less "official" and more down to earth. Aleson noted, "Completed typing from penciled journal on Dec. 22, 1952, at Richfield Utah. A few minor typographical errors crept into typing errors, all with one finger, and a one-track mind."

[8] The Shinarump Conglomerate is a geological formation spread across the Four Corners states (Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah) and is controversially considered to be synonymous with the Dockum Group (Wikipedia, "Chinle Formation.") The formation, originally described by John Wesley Powell contains much gray cross-bedding that includes lenses of sandstone of varied textures that contain pebbles of quartz and quartzite. Fossil wood is abundant. Logs 50 feet long and 2.5 feet in diameter appear near the top of the formation. ("The Kaiparowits Region: A Geographic and Geologic Reconnaissance of Parts of Utah and Arizona" by Herbert E. Gregory and Raymond C. Moore. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 164. Washington, DC: USGS, 1931.)

[9] Bert Loper (July 31, 1869 – July 8, 1949), often referred to as "The Grand Old Man of the Colorado," lived in a cabin here from 1907 to 1915.

[10] The Chinle formation is an Upper Triassic continental geological formation with fluvial, lacustrine, and palustrine to eolian deposits. (Wikipedia, "Chinle Formation.")

[11] Cass Hite left Missouri at the age of 16 and prospected through the West, adapting easily to the wild lifestyle of the mining camps. In Telluride he killed his first man in an argument over a mining claim. Not taking kindly to being hanged, he lit out in search of a Navajo silver mine, Pish-la-ki. Befriending the Navajo, he began working a sandbar for silver at "Hite's Crossing," and in the late 1880s he moved 12 miles down river to the mouth of Red Canyon, where he built a cabin. In an argument over a gold claim, Hite shot to death a man named Kohler who worked the North Wash placer in Glen Canyon. Eventually caught, he spent time behind bars in Green River, Utah.

During incarceration his health deteriorated, and he returned to spend the remainder of his days at his cabin. He was found dead by Alonzo G. Turner in 1914. (*The Glen Canyon Reader*, Mathew B. Gross, and the *Tombstone News*.)

[12] The Kayenta Formation is Jurassic in age and makes up the middle third section of the Glen Canyon Group. Dinosaur tracks are often found here. ("The San Juan Country: A Geographic and Geologic Reconnaissance of Southeastern Utah" by Herbert E. Gregory. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 188. Washington, DC: USGS, 1938.)

[13] In river morphology, a bar is an elevated region of sediment such as sand and gravel that has been deposited by flow generally in the shallowest and slowest-moving parts of rivers. Good Hope Bar was located by George and Frank Gillian working with Cass Hite. Later the claim was worked by Bert Seabolt, who built a large reservoir, with a flume to it from the river. Good Hope and Pioneer Placer were the only known patented claims in the upper part of Glen Canyon. ("Geology and Geography of the Henry Mountains Region, Utah" by Charles B. Hunt. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 228 [issues 7–9]. Washington, DC: USGS, 1953.)

[14] Most of the miners stayed in Glen Canyon only temporarily, sustained by grubstakes earned elsewhere. During summer and spring the miners tended their farms, which provided a year's supply of fruits and vegetables for canning. The fall months were spent placer mining, but a considerable part of the time had to be devoted to repairing ditches, machinery, and other equipment. At two or three dollars a day with an annual income of \$150–\$200 a year, it was a hard way to make a living. ("Geology and Geography of the Henry Mountains Region, Utah" by Charles B. Hunt. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 228 (issues 7–9). Washington, DC: USGS, 1953.)

[15] A hogback is a homoclinal (sedimentary rock) ridge, formed by a monocline (steplike fold in a rock) composed of steeply tilted strata of rock.

[16] Moki steps allowed relatively quick access to difficult-to-reach areas such as slot canyons, lookout stations, and granaries. In addition, they provided a way to get to fertile canyon bottoms and to deter the ever-present enemy, real or imagined. Often they would be used in conjunction with ropes.

[17] Artist Elizabeth Sprang recalls in her book *Good-Bye River* on her trip with Aleson and Sprang after Dudy died, that Harry Aleson had an interesting and quite time-consuming way to take off and add layers of clothing in fall on a Glen Canyon trip: "Harry Aleson, a well-known riverman, is said to have licked this problem by dressing over his pajamas when he first got up, then by removing layer by layer as the day warmed up, until he was prancing around the sandbar in polka-dot pajamas, sun helmet, beard, and camera. Later he would add on."

[18] Aleson later wrote "Ways to Get Rid of Nick the Mick: First off, teach him other ways to get his milk other than licking it off his paw. Teach THE MICK to soak his tail in milk; teach THE MICK to suck the milk: Teach THE MICK to swallow deep; then cross your fingers and toes and maybe, just maybe, he'll swallow tail and all, and you'll have no more MICK! Any doubter in the land would readily see that he did it all by himself." Sprang wrote, "Dudy was quite furious about your letter, but has come to accept the reality that the next time we're out in the sticks Mickey will be promptly and thoroughly eliminated. ... Almost got rid of the Mick when a door closed on him—but he's too tough to notice."

[19] With the pending threat of Glen Canyon Dam to sites, in 1956 archaeologists and biologists from the University of Utah and the Museum of Northern Arizona, using National Park research grants, planned an "emergency excavation" of lower Glen Canyon. However, the job was rushed. The loss of archaeological treasures is immeasurable. [www.lakepowell.org/archeology\\_summary.org](http://www.lakepowell.org/archeology_summary.org). [20] In 1959, archaeologist Jesse Jennings named the site "Defiance House" on a survey of Glen Canyon. (*A Wild River Tamed* by Pete Klocki and Tiffany Mapel)

[21] The temptation for Canyon Surveys to hunt for pots and extract them in the John Wetherill tradition must have been unbearable, and they surely succumbed. It was an era of quasi-archaeology perhaps originating with the all-out rape-and-plunder of early pot hunters like the "Best Mining Company Expedition" on its Grand Canyon trip in search of gold. Under expedition leader McCormick, they launched on the Green River July 15, 1891. When they arrived at Dandy Crossing in Glen Canyon (in the vicinity of the Dirty Devil River), the fascinating and scenic country with its many side canyons with prehistoric buildings and granaries was not lost on McCormick. He took special interest in these sites, especially around Forbidden Canyon, and realized it would be a profitable side venture for the expedition. Plundering the "valuable relics" would "yield rich reward, and in themselves prove bonanzas to explorers." The June 13, 1891, issue of *The Coconino Sun*, Arizona, reported that the Best Mining Company planned to haul out 3,000 pounds of these artifacts. (*Colorado Grand Canyon Mining and Improvement Company and A Fortune Awaits Enterprise Here*. Robert Sorgenfrei)

[22] Gus Scott notes in *Glen Canyon, The Living Heart* that he and a companion discovered a note under a cairn written on official yellow Canyon Surveys notebook paper. "To whom it may concern: This canyon traversed from the mouth (10 + miles) and return by undersigned Oct 23, 24, 25, 1952. For length and drainage system refer to USSCS aerial photo, Symbol COG, 3 – numbers 161 & 149. No map reference can be given since no map known to us charts the course of this major canyon. It is believed that this is the first complete traverse made. Previously unnamed, we suggest it be called 'Forgotten Canyon' as proposed by Canyon Survey's symbol in cliff above cairn."

[23] The Smith brothers prospected here at Hansen Creek and at the Sun Dog Bar.

[24] In 1888, four California prospectors including Haskell and Brown found and prospected California Bar. They set up an 80-horsepower boiler, using coal that they mined at the head of Hansen Creek. Finding fairly good values culminated in a small gold rush.

[25] Alonzo Turner had a mining comrade named Kimball. Near the center of the mile-long California Bar (abandoned by Haskell and Brown after they assumed all the gold had been mined) was one of the richest gold deposits in Glen Canyon. They rigged a canvas sail to their boat and sailed up

river to Hite for mail and supplies, often cashing in their gold in Hanksville and the Ekker General Store. Driven out by summer heat, they spent summers in the Henry Mountains. Turner died on the California Bar and was buried in a trench that he himself had dug. His buddy Kimball died in 1926; his body was transported to Hanksville, where the ladies stayed up all night and kept his body cool and wet for the funeral the next day while Bert Loper told river stories. (Paul Huber from "History Helper")

[26] Fingerprints were imprinted in the mortar as if it had been built yesterday. University of Utah archaeologists later named the ruin Wasp House. (Gary Topping)

[27] Aleson scrawled his name next to that of Richard Wetherill, son of renowned cowboy/pot hunter John Wetherill. Aleson had visited here 5-6-47, 4-30-48, 8-28-49, 10-5-51, and now 11-2-52. He rhetorically referred to these markings as "sacrilege"—as though he knew better but just could not restrain himself. Though it is not mentioned in his journal, he excavated several pots at the Defiance House ruins. On his 1947 trip, he brought out half of a pelvic bone, for which he may have paid dearly as his health continued to decline. Richard Wetherill was shot to death by Navajo Chis-Cliling-Begay, possibly for disturbing the spirits of the dead.

[28] According to Sprang ("Sprang Notes: Lake Canyon Quad," March 1984), the "historic landmark" was "the highest part of the southeastern part of the Waterpocket Fold, made famous by two intrepid canyon rats of a bygone and far more adventurous time when there wasn't a road in the whole fucking country, and by hell, a walker was really on his own in the truly wild lone. In laying out the course of Harry's and my 1952 hike from Lake Canyon to Moki, I dug out the old aerials we had used. I reread Harry's journal reference to refresh my memory of where we struck the little side canyon of Moki, and disagree with him slightly on the contact point. I maintain his course was 42 degrees magnetic (which figures to be 57 degrees true.) Harry's 15-degree error was a source of much kidding of him by his good friend Joe Moser, who would say, 'We don't need isotonic charts anymore in river country. We'll just take Harry along and have him point our course. Then we'll factor in the 15 degrees east and hit our destination on the nose.' Harry came to enjoy this kind of remark, and turned it to his advantage by telling people that had he been born with an infallible instinct for TRUE North heading, and had he been around in the age of Perry and Scott, he would have easily discovered the North Pole because he wouldn't have had to waste time factoring out the north magnetic pole which is located about 1,300 miles from geographic or true north pole. Poor Harry. Moser and I never let anyone's mistakes (except our own) die a forgiven and dignified death."

[29] A stereoscope is an optical device by which two photographs of the same object taken at slightly different angles are viewed together to impart a three-dimensional effect. (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

[30] Aleson later wrote, "Who makes discoveries? He who first sees? He who first reports? He who first photographs and makes known? There have been many times in my life when I thought I'd discovered something, but I frankly admit that I never discovered anything. Why are whitemen always discovering things and places that natives have known for ages?"

[31] Aleson continues: "Dick does all the sighting—I watch the bubble. After a half dozen moves forward, we come to a point that gives us 45 degrees on sight to skyline at wall of junction. We set stake A to be the north end of our base line. We continue clearing (brushing) five-foot-wide base line to the edge of Moqui Creek. Finally, on the mudflat of last year's backwater at Moqui Creek, we place stake B to be the south end of our baseline. Independently, we three guess the additional distance to a point C somewhere inside the high wall, and directly below the skyline point sighted in by Dick."

[32] Neil Judd was the first trained, professional archaeologist to work in the state of Utah, and a major force in early archaeology. He surveyed and excavated several mounds in the Wasatch Front valley in the Kanab area, the Arizona Strip, and in and around House Rock Valley, but there is no evidence that he was ever in Glen Canyon ("Vermilion Dreamers, Sagebrush Schemers," Jerry D. Spangler). It was no matter to Aleson, who took the shovel stub, and trash, and mailed it to Neil M. Judd at the Smithsonian in Washington "to see if he recalls a shovel being cut off here."

Aleson had a very active imagination. When he stumbled upon anything he considered unusual, he sent letters to his friends (mainly preeminent river historian Otis R. "Dock" Marston) of his "discoveries," down to the last dried-out fragment of leather. In Glen Canyon in 1947 he came upon an old trunk in Music Temple that belonged to canyon wanderer Bertie Graves, and listed its contents as if were as significant as the original writings of the Bhavagad Gita. On another occasion, Aleson found an "Ambrose & Company" liquor bottle in an isolated location near the old Bridger Crossing, and since it was found along an old Mormon wagon train route, he surmised it had great historic value. He sent it first to the Smithsonian for identification, and to what was then called the Utah Liquor Control Commission for dating. It proved to be an irrelevant find.

[33] Robert Brewster Stanton was an engineer who in 1889 and 1890 conducted a railroad survey down the Colorado River. Plagued by drownings and lack of financial backers, he turned to other enterprises. By 1909, he had staked out mining claims for the entire 169 miles of Glen Canyon. As head of a mining company, he installed a bucket dredge to recover the placer gold. The dust was too fine and the project failed. (C. Gregory Crampton, *Land of the Living Rocks*)

[34] Arthur L. Chaffin was a road builder, ferry operator, and Indian trader. He built a home in Hite, a small community named for Cass Hite who discovered a convenient crossing of the Colorado River (referred to as Dandy Crossing) in the

early 1930s. In 1932, Chaffin "borrowed" a bulldozer from the Utah Highway Department and cut an infamous road down North Wash connecting Hite with Hanksville. In 1945 road construction began, connecting Hite with Blanding, thus opening the country to automobile tourism. On September 7, 1946, Chaffin established a ferry "powered by a Ford car" to cross the river ([www.historytogo.utah.gov](http://www.historytogo.utah.gov)). We know what happened in 1965. The government screwed Chaffin, and the waters of the Powell Reservoir buried his property.

[35] Dr. J.C. Millen (July 5, 1859 – April 26, 1901) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At an early age he became interested in medicine, so in 1885, to enable him to continue his studies, he began manufacturing rolls of blueprint paper for commercial purposes. By 1890, he began producing a high grade of paper called "French Satin Jr." for architects and engineers. A graduate of the Hahnemann Homeopathic Medical College, he was a student of chemistry and a microscopist. He was a man of great magnetism and skill. When his health began to fail, he moved to Denver, Colorado, and became an amateur photographer, developing a line of photographic chemical supplies. (*Transactions of the American Microscopical Society* vol. 25).

[36] Stanton's Hoskaninni Mining Company Dredge required between 16 and 20 teams of horses to transport the 180-ton load from Green River, Utah, to the Colorado River. This necessitated blasting a road between Mt. Pennell and Mt. Hillers. It's been estimated that the double-decker dredge cost \$100,000, perhaps double that. Its first year of operation in 1901 yielded \$30 in gold as the sand was simply too fine and was thrown out of the dredge as wastewater. After months of no return, the dredge was abandoned. (*Glen Canyon Dammed*, Jared Farmer)

[37] Letter to Dock Marston from William J. Davis, August 7, 1967: "Over the years in the Canyons, I had noticed a number of piles of stones. Some were located a long ways from the river, generally on a peak or on high ground. And I noticed that a bottle would generally be located in its center. After opening the bottle, I would find a note written by Harry Aleson. Sometimes, he would ask others to add their names to his paper. Other times he said [to] add your names on this paper and do not mark up the sandstone cliffs, or something like that. Yet I found his name inscribed on a number of rocks. One such rock was in the 'first drop' of Cataract Canyon. His name along with Georgie White. It gave the year. How is Mr. Aleson now? Years ago I heard he was not feeling well"

[38] Nineteen-year-old Al Scorup left a weeping mother and crossed 300 miles of the Colorado Plateau with a spare horse, sacks of pinto beans, a slab of bacon, and blankets. He began working with a herd of Longhorns in White Canyon in wild country filled with "that awful silence." Later in life, he joined his brother Jim in an uneasy and at times competitive partnership. (Neal Lambert: "Al Scorup: Cattleman of the Canyons," *Utah Historical Quarterly* vol. 32 no. 3)

[39] From an August 20, 1952, letter to a client and friend from

*Western River Tours in Glen Canyon:* "My Dear Jim, For several months now, I've been planning to buy a portable record player, along with a collection of fine records, to carry on river vacation runs for an occasional evening of music down in the colorful river canyons. Sometimes when the air is perfectly still, I shall very quietly slip out of camp in the darkness, row across river unannounced, and begin the evening concert in the mouth of an enormous sandstone cave, using it as a sounding board."

[40] Tom Pendergast was a shady individual who ran the Democratic political machine in Kansas City, Missouri. He backed Truman, helping him win a Senate seat in the primary and general election races. The fact that Pendergast was convicted of income tax evasion in 1939 and served 15 months in prison did not escape Aleson's attention. ([www.trumanlibrary.org/trivia/penderga.htm](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/trivia/penderga.htm))

[41] At the prompting of river runners and history buffs Gary Topping and Gus Scott, the bridge was later named Harry Aleson Arch by the Utah Board of Geographic Names.

[42] "Neither Dick nor Dudy held Elmer Purtymun in very high regard. Dick represented him to me as a grizzled old character they knew from Sedona. On Harry's Lone Month in Glen Canyon in 1950, Purtymun got the idea he wanted to be a river guide. Dudy, who had had a dude-herding business with her previous husband, wanted no part of it, and of course Dick had no inclination for it either. Purtymun may have looked like a guide, but he didn't know what he was doing. He tried to take a party through the Grand and found it was a very different situation than Glen. He and Donny Van Daren left the party at Hance Rapid. Donney made it, but Elmer came in later on a rescue mule after nearly dying of thirst. The rest of the party had had enough, and hiked out at Granite Falls. Dick said he saw Elmer soon after he got back and he was going around with a death grip on a water bottle." (Gary Topping, associate professor at Salt Lake Community College, author of *Glen Canyon and the San Juan Country*, and former Curator of Manuscripts at the Utah Historical Society )

[43] Hole in the Rock is a steep narrow crevice located on the western rim of Glen Canyon that provided a route for the 1879 Mormon San Juan Expedition, which was sent by Brigham Young to colonize southeastern Utah. Harry wrote, "Beginning with 1947, and up to the last November 1954, I believe I have seen, followed, traced out in isolated areas every yard of the 1879–80 Mormon Wagon Road from Highway #89 to the present village of Bluff, Utah."

[44] For three decades, Dave Rust (1874–1963) was the premier backcountry outfitter and guide in southern Utah. Seduced by the landscape of the Plateau Province of southeast Utah, he wanted to share its awesome silence, its beauty and mystery, and mine the rich vein of knowledge that ran through the country. He felt he failed as a guide if he could not enrich the minds of his clients to achieve a deeper understanding not only of the country, but of themselves. Rust confided in Aleson, who was a friend, when he heard of the suicide of river

man Buzz Holmstrom. As he tried to assuage the difficulties of growing old, Rust thought it most unfortunate that there was no "springboard" where old boys who had spent most of their lives on the river could finish their lives in a more honorable fashion. Toward the end of his life, Rust wrote to Aleson: "Dear Harry Aleson, Thanks so much for detailed report of your meanderings in Glen Canyon and San Juan River regions. Sorry to miss seeing you when you called. You should have walked in and gone to bed.

Glad you enjoyed Lyman's *The Intangible*. Keep the book as long as you please—and glad you had such a historic hob-nob with Lyman. Now in my eighth decade I have no inclination to take a last ride down the river as Bert Loper did, although the manner of his burial, however, is altogether enviable. Fred Dellenbaugh [member of J. W. Powell's 1871 expedition and author of *The Romance of the Colorado River*] wrote me when he was about 80 that if he

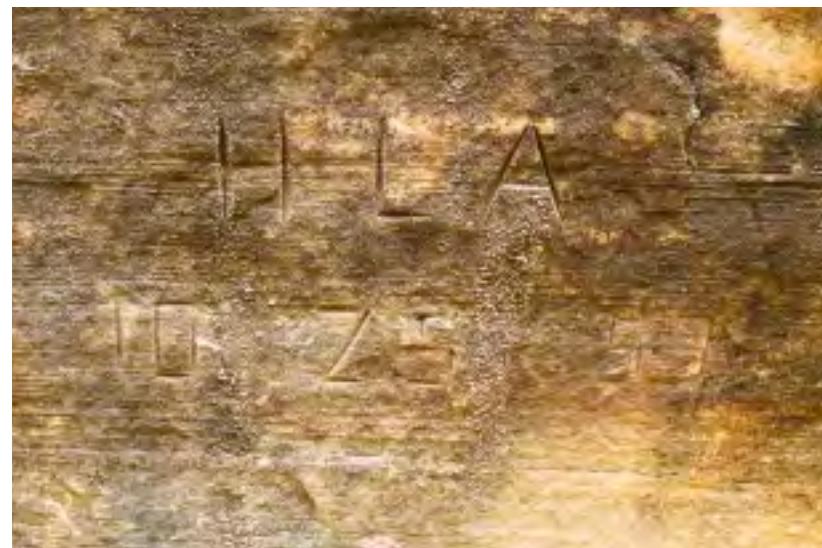
were to die on a last visit to his beloved "Romance," that he wanted his body to be sent afloat. So long, Sincerely, Dave

[45] "When the Idols Move" is the last chapter in Lyman's book *The Intangible* and a metaphor for the book's illusive narrative, focused on illusion and wonder. Like a mirage—an optical phenomenon in which light rays are bent to produce a displaced image, which apparently Aleson was experiencing.

[46] "I fail to see the modern-day Boy Scouts appreciate historic values the way we felt we did as kids. Their 8 to 10 inch scratching and scrawling alongside the Powell Party inscriptions in Music Temple is still a bit 'sour' with me. Therefore I do not feel like helping bring about the possible scrawling of scores of names, initials, dates, and what-not in our respected Spanish Explorer's crossing place inside Padre Canyon." (Letter to Dock Marston)

[47] Charles L. Bernheimer, a wealthy New Yorker, sponsored three trips to Rainbow Bridge. In 1922, he opened a new route through the rugged canyons west of Navajo Mountain using a string of 28 animals, seven men, and a sizable amount of dynamite, TNT and black powder. (Scott Thybony author of *The Incredible Grand Canyon* and *The Painted Desert*.)

[48] The Crossing of the Fathers [El Vado de los Padres] marks the passing of the Dominguez and Escalante party in November, 1776 in their unsuccessful attempt to find an overland trail to Monterey, California. A friend of Aleson, Charles Kelly writes, "Harry Aleson passed a few days ago with two passengers. We will soon have to install traffic lights at the Crossing of the Fathers. Harry made a previous river trip this spring, and while on the river somewhere made one of his lone hikes into back country. Got lost for two days, nearly choked to death, and was rescued by an Indian hired by the others in the party for \$20. Haven't heard all the details yet."



Batman in Glen Canyon



Batman in Glen Canyon