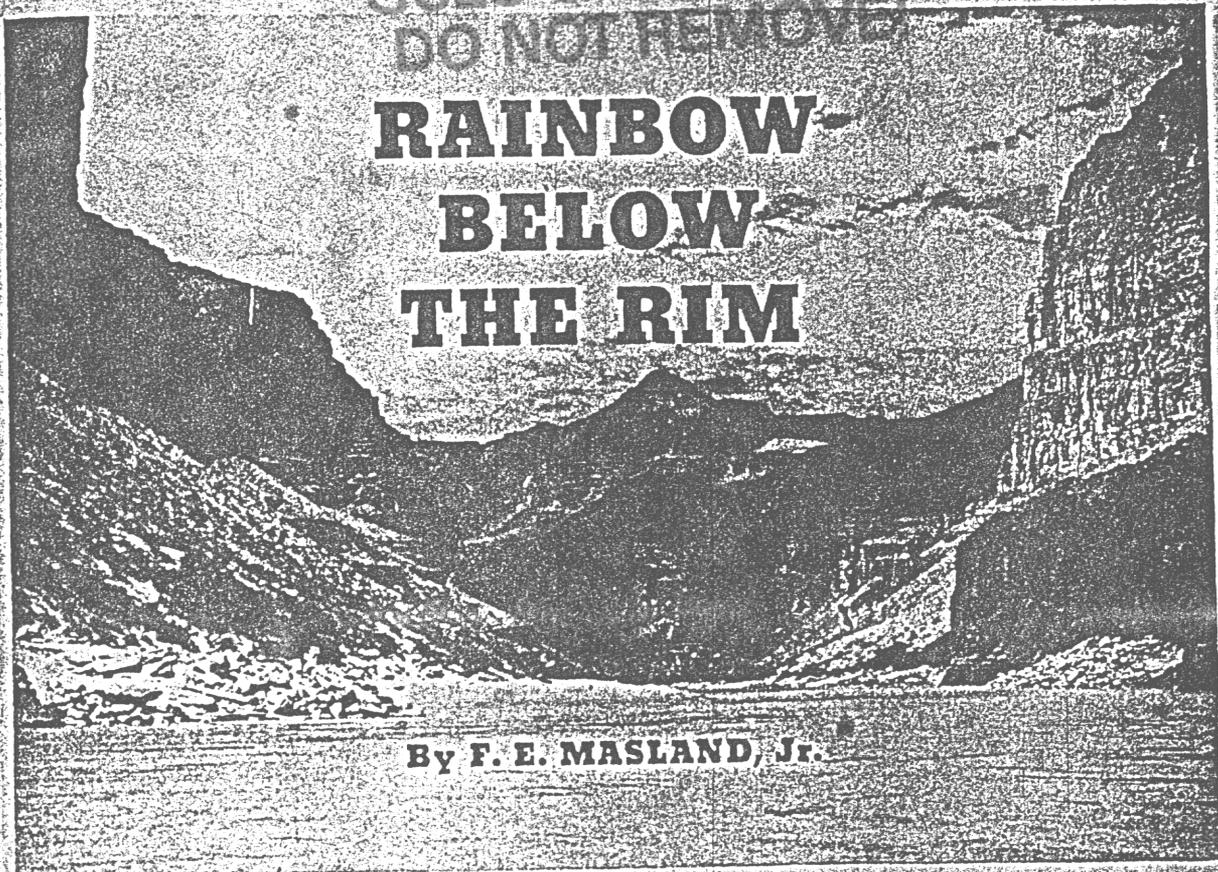


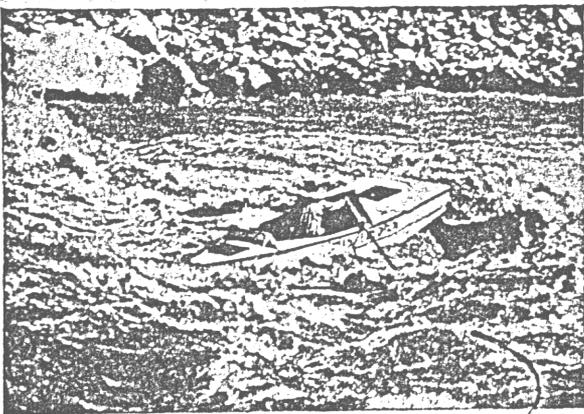
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RAINBOW BELOW THE RIM

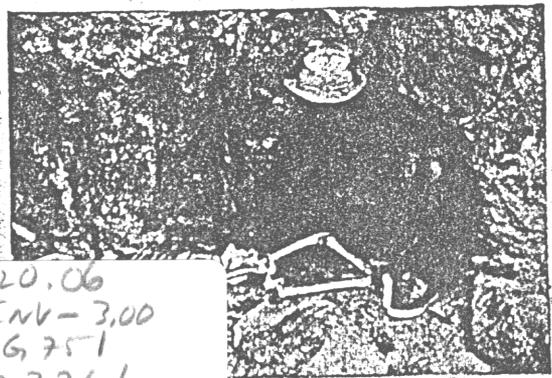


By F. E. MASLAND, Jr.

For sheer beauty the wide vistas of Marble Canyon with its steppes, buttes, spires and mesas are unequalled



The boat fights a brutal battle with the surging waves
Many have tried to run the Colorado, and failed



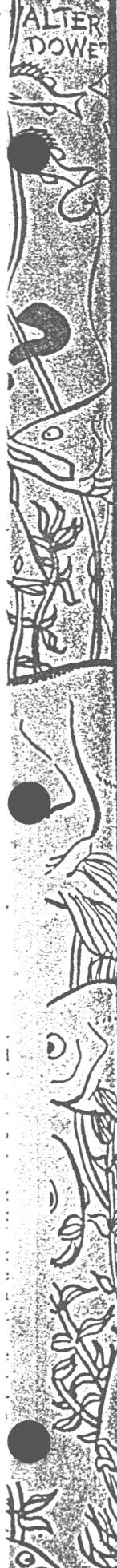
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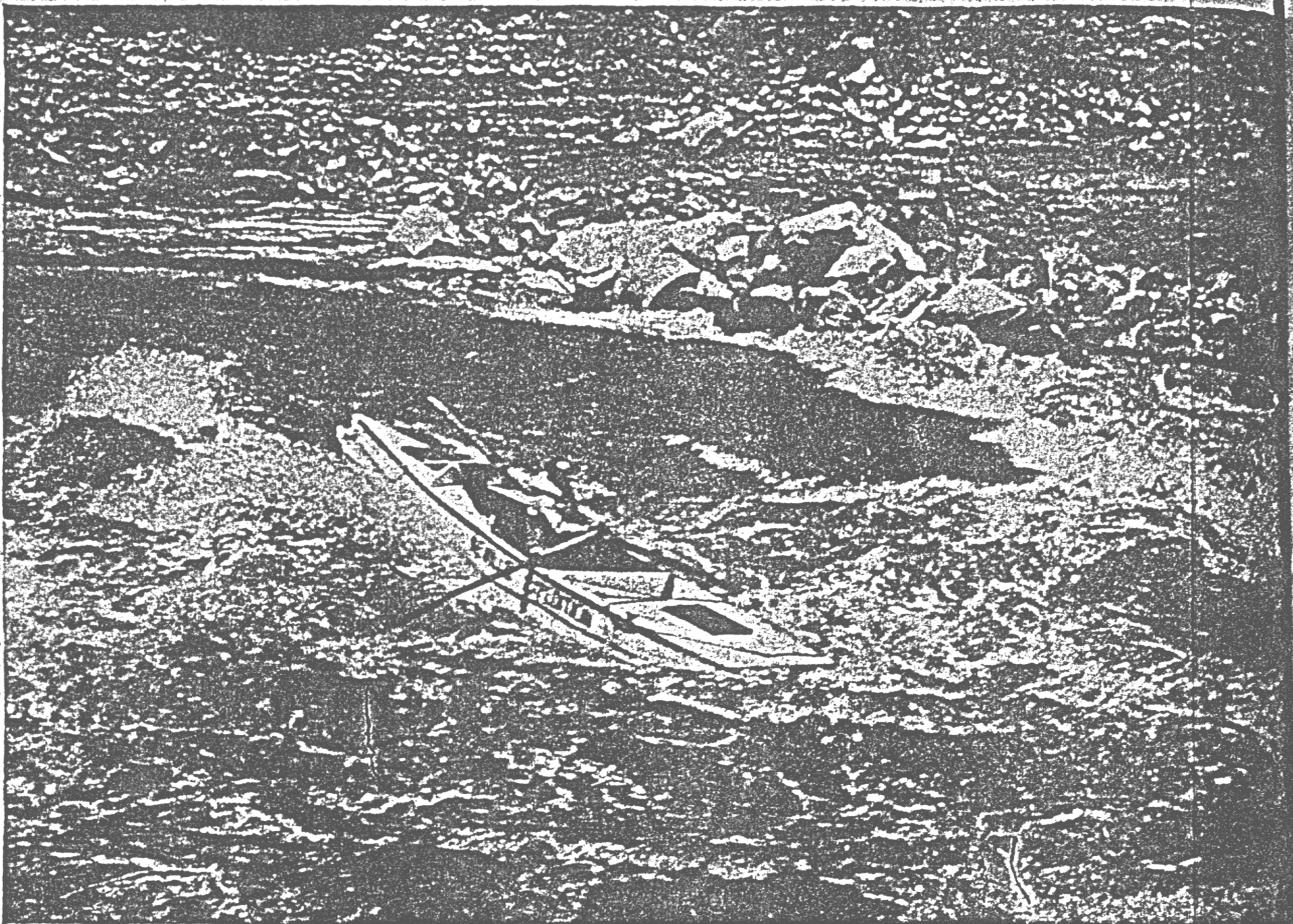
Running the 250-mile gorge of the mighty Colorado is an adventure full of excitement and danger, and there's no turning back once you have started

I HAVE READ of trout in the frozen North, in the tropic South, in rushing mountain streams and placid valley rivers; but never have I read of them, nor caught them, 5000 feet below the rim of the earth. They are there, however, and there they'll always be, for it's 250 miles, 21 days and 150 rapids from the gates of civilization to the land that was there when time began. They'll always be there, for to reach them one must travel through the five ages of the earth—from the Cenozoic, the age of today; back 1,500,000,000 years to the Archeozoic era. We must travel through layers of limestone and-lava sandstone, shale and granite from the life of today to the lifelessness of the past. For the rock that bounds this hidden stream was melted and molten in the fires of the earth's conception and born in the pains of its first travail.

If by this time you have begun to wonder what fairy tale I am about to tell, let me assure you that, though no fable, it is indeed fabulous. The trout are there, 20-inch voracious,

cul422





It seems hard to believe that any boat can live long in this maelstrom, or a boatman find his way through

hard-fighting, fearless rainbows. Only one man has found the way successfully to reach them, and one other man successfully to catch them. When the spirit moves, Norman Nevills, who lives in Mexican Hat, Utah, organizes a group of congenial souls and heads down the Colorado River. Otis (Doc) Marston of Berkeley, California, goes along to handle a boat and catch the fish.

This last summer I had the rare privilege of being one of the favored few who have made the trip from Lees Ferry to Lake Mead. I say "few" for since Major Powell made the first trip through in 1869 only one hundred have followed him, though twice that number have made the attempt. Before the Major made his run, the river had been a legend only and its history made up of Indian superstitions. Stories that it disappeared within the earth and ran through tunnels in the canyon walls called for men possessed of resolution and of valor.

Norm Nevills and Doc Marston are their modern-day successors. King of Colorado River Rats and of fast-water boatmen everywhere, Norm is the intrepid leader; Doc, a skillful and courageous boatman, is the greatest of the river authorities and its one and only active professor of the piscatorial art.

The start is made at Lees Ferry, Arizona, for nowhere else can it be made, since for 250 miles it's a river of no return. There's no rowing back nor walking out. From Lees Ferry the river is the road the voyager follows, and the canyon walls that tower from its sides mark the confines of his world. Down that one-way road he alternately drifts, transfixed by the grandeur of his surroundings, or plunges as he tips the rim of the rapid and is engulfed in the roaring,

Camped on a smooth beach, the party rests tired bodies



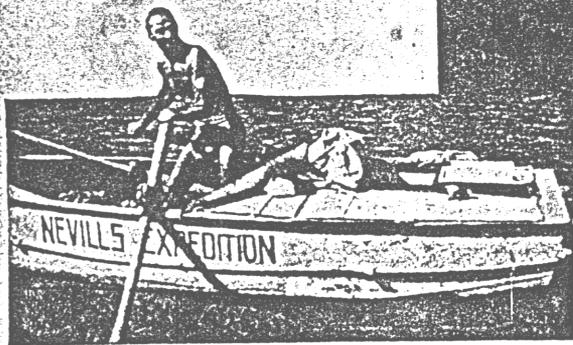
★ 21 days down the River of No Return

★ 150 rapids packed with thrills and danger

★ 250 miles of primitive, awe-inspiring grandeur

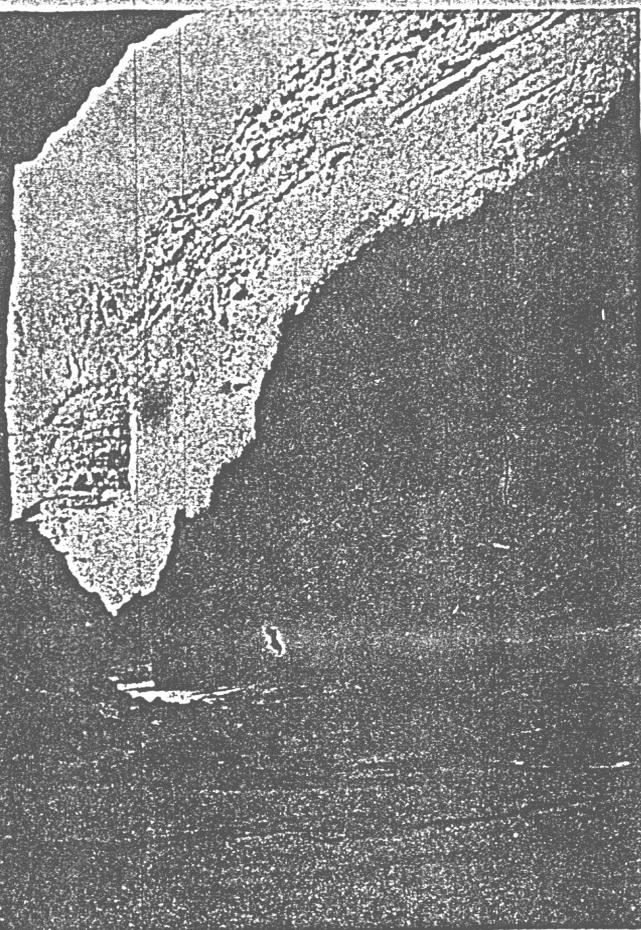
★ 5,000-foot canyons, deep below the rim of the earth

★ 1,500,000,000 years of geologic history race by in a day



Norm Nevills, the King of Colorado River Rats, and head of the expedition, has run the river many times

Doc Marston, photographer and fisherman for the trip, gets some help from one of the ladies of the party in cleaning a mess of trout for supper



The river glides past red-walled caves, towering arches and rock-hewn bridges that leap from rim to sky

smashing maelstrom of the churning water.

As we leave our friends, waving to us from the shore, we enter Marble Canyon with its towering 1,000-foot red walls. Along their sides the blue-green desert varnish forms strange and grotesque patterns, as though some Paul Bunyan of the ancient past had used them as a giant canvas. Slowly, imperceptibly the consciousness of a deep, persistent murmur breaks upon us, and we hear Garth Marston, boatman of the *Sandra*, No. 2 boat in the fleet, break into the song with which he welcomes each rapid, "Throw out the life line, throw out the life line." That, together with the murmur which quickly becomes a roar, is all the warning we need that our first Colorado River rapid is about to break upon us.

For many months since first we knew we'd make the canyon trip we had dreamed of the thrill that was now to be ours. In the books of the early explorers we'd read of the 30-foot holes, of waves twice as high, of suction waves and whirlpools. Now we would truly test the river, and just as truly would the river be testing us. How would we respond to its challenge? These thoughts crowded our minds as we felt the water clutch at us and were drawn down that smooth, deceptive tongue which marks a rapid's entrance.

There can be no thrill to surpass that of the moments which followed. The days to come would find us running rapid after rapid, each with its own peculiar thrill, but nothing can take the place of the first. The vicious slap of the reverse wave as we enter the rough water, the hole that we first see as we top a crown wave surging over a hidden rock and into which we plunge straight down to burst through the curl at the far side, spitting and sputtering. The boat full of water, lateral and explosion (Continued on page 118)

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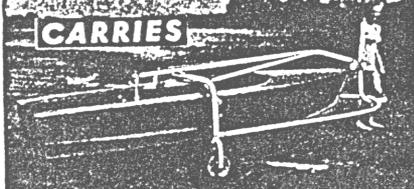
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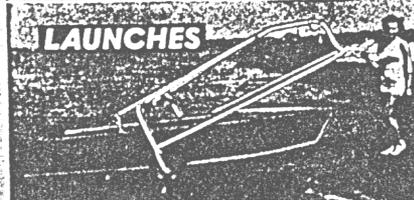


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A removable fish-box, sufficiently long inside to take an eight-foot sailfish, fits across the stern. When trolling the Bahamas for large marlin and tuna, the fish-box is removed. In place, it drains through the cockpit scuppers.

A small live-bait well, located under the cockpit deck. Despite the high speeds attained by this boat, the monel-lined bait well keeps mullet alive for several days.

Big fish are loaded aboard by a gin pole, with block-and-tackle, stepped into the cockpit deck at the after port side of the deckhouse. Rod holders are set into the rails, flush with the top of the gunwales. The two fuel tanks, each of 100-gallon capacity and constructed of stainless steel, are easily removable.

'Miss Chevy II' was designed and built by men who know their fishing. She is ideally suited for any kind of fishing, from a jaunt down the bay with the whole family aboard to a serious crack at record big-game fish on distant grounds.

RAINBOW BELOW THE RIM

(Continued from page 63)

waves, surges, rocks, whirlpools and eddies. And above all, the rapid's roar, a sound born of the terrifying turmoil of the water hurling itself at the canyon's walls, at the rocks that bar its way, of waves that explode high in the air and crash back upon themselves, and of the sound that's underneath—the sullen deep and brutal roar of the battle being fought among the boulders and the caverns in the hidden depths below us.

All this is beyond our wildest imagination. Surely no boat can live long in it, no boatman find his way through. It seems beyond all possibilities, but even as these thoughts are formed our bodies thrill to the challenge, our spirits burst all bounds, and we find ourselves yelling and shouting as the water pounds upon us and our boats fight their way through. Then it's over and we rest in the quiet water at the rapid's foot, our boats idly drifting like horses cooling out after a race.

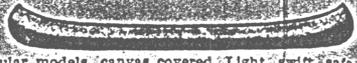
And so on the days go as we follow this one and only way to the fish of Tapeat, the rainbow below the earth. We stop at Vasey's Paradise, a great stream of clear, cold water that bursts from a huge hole high up in the canyon wall. Falling from rock to rock before it enters the river, it provides us with a chance to cool our bodies from the 120-degree heat to which we later become so accustomed that at night we are chilled.

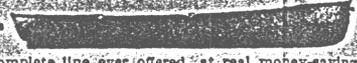
Almost reluctantly we enter the granite gorges where the black Archean rock forms the billion-and-a-half-year-old base on which our earth is laid and from which the granite rises, rugged, black and dangerous. Here, as nowhere else, the sense of isolation deepens the remoteness of the present and the closeness of the past becomes so real. No man who passes that way and, reaching out, touches the black Archean rock wrinkled with the greatness of its age can ever again have quite the same sense of proportions that till then he so fondly nourished. Ever after in the mind's eye, he has a picture of man in his little boat drifting quickly past eternity. There, if ever, a thousand years are but a day.

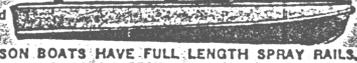
There were days when, from a cloudless sky, black roaring winds would rush through the canyon, bringing rain that beat and chilled our superheated bodies.

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FIELD & STREAM APRIL 1963

With the rain the lightning flashed against the red-wall back-drop and the thunder rolled and echoed everlastingly, never dying but overtaken by each succeeding beat.

And the canyon nights! No fisherman in search of the promised land could travel a more star-studded route. The rapids were the thrills, the rainbow-colored canyon walls the Master Painter's work; but each night as I tucked myself beneath a star-spangled blue coverlet above I knew that there could be no greater blessing than a tired body and a mind at ease. Sometimes the moonlight on the canyon walls, the temples and the buttes above was so soul-stirring that we would fight sleep until we had our fill, or until sleep became the victor.

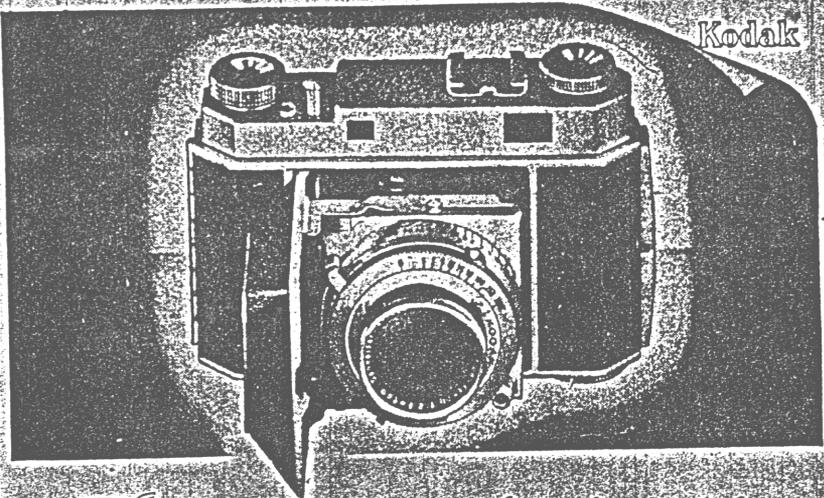
It is an elemental trip, this route to the fabulous fish. The elements were the most important factors in our lives—the wind which brought the storms that forced us to the shelter of an over-hanging cliff, the sun that beat so mercilessly upon our tanned and naked bodies, the heat from which we sought escape beneath the water's surface, that same water which we drank on which we drifted and which in rapid after rapid we had battled. Through Soap and Hanse and Hermit, Granite, Lava and Bouchere, giants all, and those immortals of the river, Sockdolager and Grape Vine. Fifty major rapids, a total of three times that number.

At Sockdolager and Grape Vine the walls of the canyon rise straight from the water's edge. Their rims are 1,000 feet above, and there's but one way through. No chance to look them over, no way to walk by them. The air is filled with the sound of the roar of the water's fury. Down and over the tongue we slide, a 35-foot drop into water beaten to foam. Holes that are over 20 feet deep, waves that tower that high. Into the holes we dive, through the waves we bore, and down the chute we rush. Rocks rear their heads, but the boatman's skill passes them by. The boats are full of water, and we bail while the boatman rows, pulling always away from the worst, missing a rock, explosion wave or side wall, till finally we are in the eddies, surges and whirlpools at the rapid's foot. Then in still water, where we rest while our pulses retreat from the beat of the thrill of the battle.

There's nothing like it! Nothing with which to compare it—nowhere else are such thrills to be found on the way to a stream and a fish! And there it is that finally we find ourselves.

A lovely blue-green, fast-running stream is Tapeat. Just wide enough and just deep enough, with pools that will hold fish and give a man a swim, and with power enough to cut its own red gorge far back in the hidden depths of the mesas and buttes of the canyon.

Grass grows by its edges and trees line its banks, for where there is water there is life, but only this spot has life upon its banks and life within its waters. Doc stands there, a slender bamboo in his hand and a nymph to provide the temptation. Whirling, leaping and fighting, hungry and eager and fearless, the trout's only knowledge of danger is when Doc comes down the river. The rest of us stood and watched as, from the cool green depths, Doc took one for each for breakfast—250 miles, 150 rapids, 21 days from the gates of civilization. The rapid's roaring challenge, the star-studded moonlit skies, the sunset on the mesa, the red of the limestone walls, the black of the basalt base, the glory that filled our eyes by day, and the peace that filled our souls by night. They're there, for we left them where we found them.



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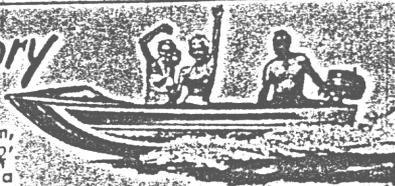
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