

Lake Mead New Mecca

Gem Set in Desert Opens Wonderland for Excursionists

BY CHESTER G. HANSON

Ferde Grofe wrote his famous Grand Canyon Suite too soon.

If he had waited until this year he would have been able to include in his delightful musical interpretations of sounds on the Grand Canyon trail the whistle of a cruiser launch.

It's a fact.

Marvels of the Grand Canyon are being enjoyed by sight-seers resting comfortably on swanky deck chairs.

DREAM NOW REALITY

And thus the long-talked-of recreational possibilities arising from the building of Hoover Dam are now moving into the realm of reality.

Seeing wonders of the Grand Canyon by motor launch is just beginning. The National Park Service, Uncle Sam's boys who spend their time thinking up ways for the folks to enjoy some of the natural wonders of the United States, have great plans for making the area around Lake Mead, formed by the building of Hoover Dam, one of the most unique recreational areas in the world.

BEACH IN DESERT

Take the people of Boulder City—the town that never was until work on the great dam was begun—or of Las Vegas. Out there on that barren expanse of mountain and desert. What have they got? A bathing beach on the shores of the greatest man-made lake in the world. Launches and sailboats. Speed-boats. Lakeside pleasures in the heart of the desert!

This lake is not a hatful of water. We completed a three-day trip over its surface in a cruiser launch. Some 105 miles up the lake from the dam.

SCENIC WONDER 204

To ride this beautiful lake is to arouse the human capacity for wonder and awe; to marvel that man with his brain and his brawn could create this sparkling jewel to enjoy forever. To be awe-struck by the scenic wonders.

This is no child's plaything, this lake. Out on its widest expanses, so wide that only blue mountains curtain off the horizon, blustering winds can kick up real white-capped waves.

DEPTH 500 FEET

The water stands today about 500 feet deep at the dam. It can rise another 132 feet or so before it will start going over the spillway—not very apt to occur except rarely. Next year at this time it is expected the water will have risen probably another 100 feet.

The lake level will fluctuate. Already on partially submerged mountains and cliffs a white band rising from the present water surface shows that earlier in the season the water has been about three feet higher than it is today.

Here is a man-made wonder

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LAKE MEAD WATERS OPEN WONDERLAND FOR TOURISTS

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that is lighting homes and turning the wheels of industry in cities hundreds of miles distant, and at the same time affording a game refuge for wild waterfowl. Geese, ducks, cranes and waterfowl common to this part of the country rise from the surface of the lake or flee from some rocky crag as the tourist's boat approaches.

Down in its blue depths—yes, the water is very clear in the lake for many miles—bass, catfish and other varieties can be seen swimming about. The government has plans for the fisherman, too.

CHANGE IN PICTURE

This is what the meditative sight-seer muses on as he glides across the lake and aboard the boat. He travels today in ease and comfort where heretofore only the intrepid few with the necessary equipment and courage dared go.

It meant man-killing work on specially constructed boats to shoot the rapids that roared through the mighty canyons of the Colorado. And here the dude tourist sits enjoying the wonders of nature in the lower reaches of the Grand Canyon with no more exertion than that required to step from his automobile or bus to the boat dock near the great dam!

TOWERING WALLS

Here are sights that only the explorers or native Indians have seen before. Here are sights to investigate over which men lost their lives.

Into canyons whose walls tower several thousand feet above the water line the boat goes. In the shadows the autumn breeze coming off the water is cool.

One of the remarkable aspects of the scene is that other than occasional brush not a sign of vegetation is seen, search as you will the horizon around.

NO HOT DOG STANDS

Better still, not a single bit of evidence of the presence of man.

No warning signs, no utility poles, no billboards, not a hot-dog stand—no nothing!

Let the National Park Service catch the first one to deface the walls of the canyons with painting or lettering!

"Look up there," exclaims Willis Evans, Indian guide and explorer employed by the National Park Service.

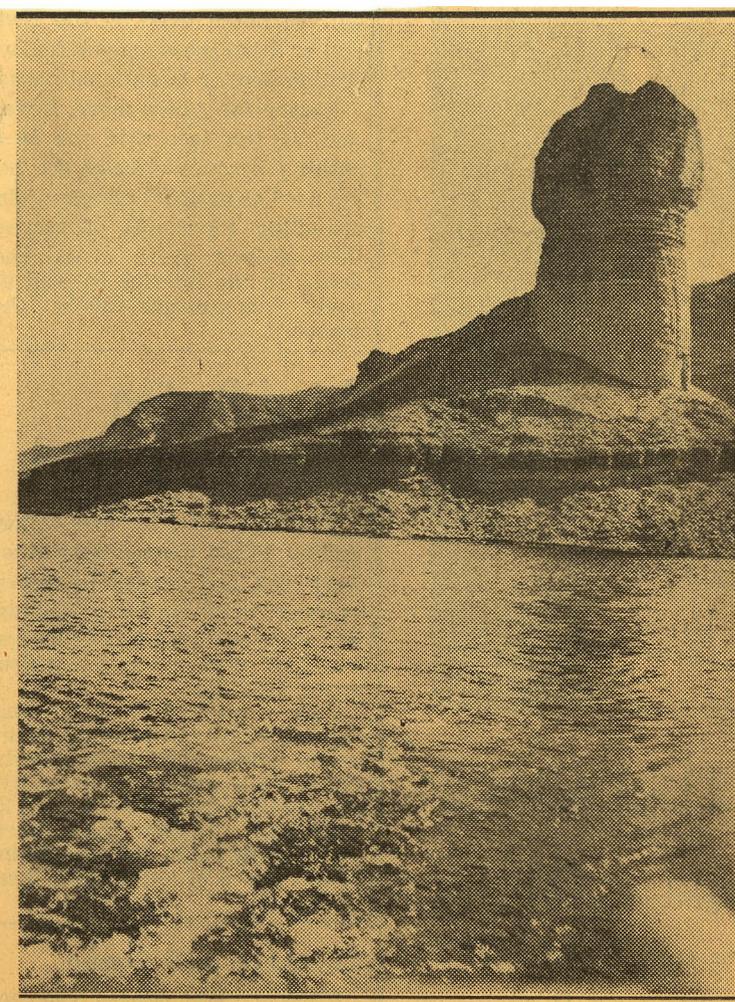
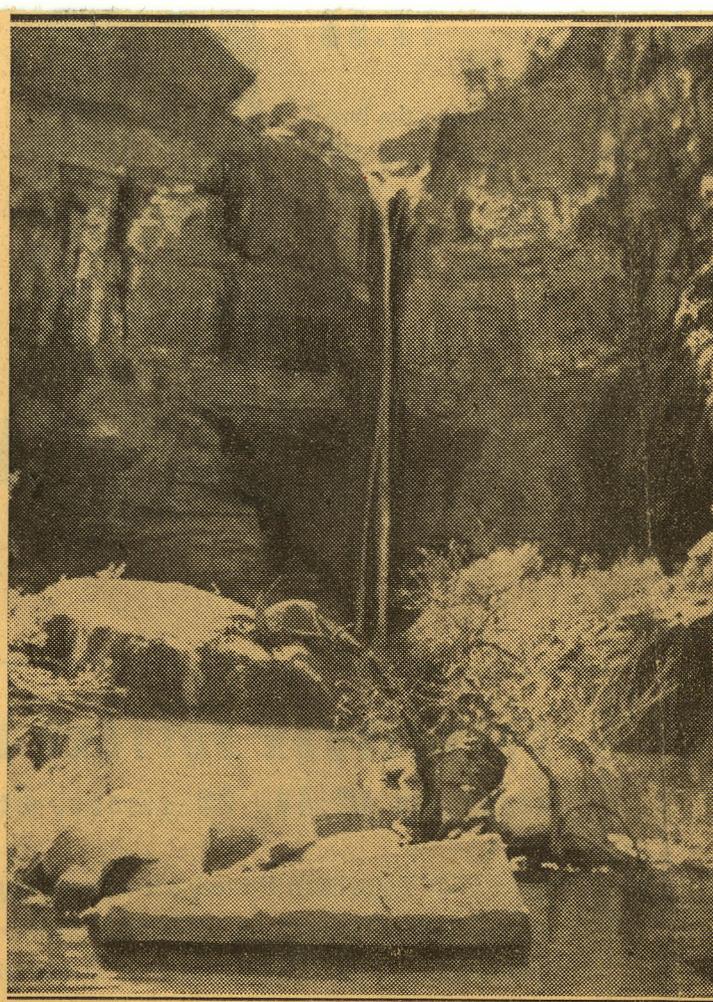
He points out a half-moon-shaped hole. The entrance to an ancient cave once inhabited by a sloth. Evans discovered it. It is at least 2000 feet above the lake level, looking out from a sheer rocky face.

TUMBLING WATERS

The boat turns off into a small basin rimmed in by great cliffs. Around a turn and there is a thin veil of water falling more than 100 feet over the edge of a cliff, seemingly from the blue sky above. It is Emory Falls. In the grotto-like setting at the foot of the falls are some trees and wild shrubs.

Coming home through the canyon as the sun began to lower, the sun's rays shot across to towering masses of rock and poured golden light upon the natural deep reds and yellows in the cliffs. The colors faded into blue and purple shadows as the walls of the cliffs reached down into the depths of the canyon and were lost in the almost black waters of the lake.

Lake Mead is going to become one of the scenic wonders of the world and, as the National Park Service plans it, one of the great recreational areas of the west.



DREAM BECOMES REALITY WITH RISE OF WATERS AT HOOVER DAM

Towering vari-colored rock temples awe excursionists on Lake Mead behind Hoover Dam, which is rapidly becoming a tourists' mecca due to its scenic attractions.

A slender, glistening ribbon of foam is Emory Falls, above, on Lake Mead, in the lower reaches of the Colorado. It is only one of the many cataracts there.

One of the marvels of the new scenic paradise on Lake Mead is this unusual rock formation, now to be seen in ease and comfort from the decks of excursion boats.

Times photos