

# NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

## SAME OLD STORY—LAST TIME

It's far from new, this series of stories running in newspapers of the Southwest chronicling the battling of flood waters in the Colorado river channel that threaten to wash away highways, railroads, and even towns on downstream from the site of Boulder dam. . . .

It's an old, old story—but it's one that perhaps is being written for the last time. Ol' Man River will just about have to get in his damage during the present high water if he's to leave any more lasting impression at all—for the water will likely be pretty well under control by next spring, with the dam to be nearly half poured by the next flood stage! ! !

Note the similarity of these stories, carried at three times far apart in the Mohave County Miner, Kingman, Arizona, newspaper. In June 1883, just fifty years ago, just after completion of the first railroad across the river at Kingman, came this story:

"The warm days over the Colo-

rado river watershed have caused a rise in that stream. It is expected that the water will now come up so fast that it may be of such importance as to carry out the railroad bridge near Needles. If the bridge goes out it will have to await the passage of the flood waters before repairs may be started."

Then, in 1903, twenty years later, and still before the City of Las Vegas had been founded:

"The Colorado river is reported to be at a high stage, the lowlands in the Mohave valley being flooded and the town of Riverside, across from Needles, has been abandoned, the people moving their effects to high ground. A still higher stage of water is expected about the middle of June. A great dam in the river in either Black or Boulder canyons would impound the flood waters and guard the river bottom from overflow to an extent that would make that territory one of the richest spots in the world."

The man who edited the paper that ran those two (and many, many other similar) stories, visited

the dam site a few days ago, to see the progress of the fulfilment of that prophetic paragraph written thirty years ago. Meanwhile, in last Friday's "Miner," he wrote:

"Van Dixon of the State Highway department has charge of the work of safeguarding the highway at Topcock from the ravages of the floods that are to be placed so that the flood waters will be turned away from the east bank of the stream, and therefore shoot the current out into the center stream channel.

"At present the stream is cutting in against the bank above the wiers that were put in last year and reinforcement must be had to keep the threat of damage away from the road and also the railroad embankment that it would surley reach if the stream reached in back of the present matrices and overflowed the banks, cutting the low-lying lands to the east and south. About 20 men were taken to the river and about 40 will eventually be put on as soon as the material is all at hand for the job."

This annual battle with flood waters at Needles is but one of the battle scenes of the Colorado. Those dykes, man-made and precarious, that confine the waters as they flow around the "rim" literally ABOVE the Imperial valley, are another dramatic battle scene when the river gets unusually high, endangering an entire valley of great wealth!

If those dykes hold out the high

water of this month, Boulder dam will take care of future floods, controlling the flow to avoid danger hereafter. Many eyes are watching with interest this last valiant fight of the unruly Colorado against the peace of mind of mankind in the Southwest!