

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

CANYON BOTTOM HIKE

They are starting that long-planned hike up through the bottom of Black canyon—along the bottom of what several months ago was the bed of the Colorado river, where Hoover dam will be built.

These two Boulder City men have left their car up in a little spot on the Nevada side of the lower workings where they believe the flying trucks will miss it as they grind past with their huge, hurtling loads.

"And this earth barrier we're walking along," one of them remarks, "was built up to this height last February when those two Nevada diversion tunnel mouths over there to the left were threatened by that unexpected flash flood. Some excitement down here then! See that water level there at our right? Not so high new, but at that time she was crowding close to the top of this dyke. If she'd broken over there'd have been acres of water to pump out of those two tunnels and tons of mud to scoop out before they could have gone ahead with the tunnel work."

The two walk to the barrier that had been dumped across the river bed to keep river water flowing out of the mouths of the diversion tunnels on the other side of the canyon from backing up to the dam site.

shelves, where men are climbing out, up ropes and ladders—other men climbing down. The pair reach the upper cofferdam, now being finished. They watch activities there, then start back. But, alas, the canyon has become a bedlam of falling boulders, both cliffs dusty with slides of rocks. . . .

Hours later, after dark, a pair of footsore travelers drag weary feet to a parked car in the lower workings.

"Dammit," says one, "I didn't dream it was so daggoned far around up over those roads around the rim of that canyon. Half a day's work walking up around there from the upper to the lower workings!"

"Yes, and if you'd got us started back while they were still changing shifts instead of letting us wait 'til that rock-rolling got started, we'd 've made it back in 10 or 12 minutes. Know better next time!"

"Won't be any next time!"