

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

MASTERING THE RIVER— THEN AND NOW

"My grandfather as likely as not was on that very trip up the Colorado. Now that was exactly 50 years ago—would make it 1883. Yes, he was working on a boat down there just about that time. Says here it was the Steamer Mohave. Now I don't remember gran'paw mentioning the name of that particular boat, but there must not've been many boats carryin' freight on the Colorado in those days."

The Hoover dam jackhammer-man chatting in the Boulder post office lobby, paused and re-read the article he had been perusing "When" column of the January in the "50 Years Ago—Remember 20, 1933 issue of the Mohave County Miner, published at Kingman.

"That was about a year before gran'paw got interested in that mine down there near Oatman. He worked for a long time on that boat.

"See, it says here: 'From the Yuma Sentinel it is learned that the steamer Mohave, with barges 3 and 4, with 727,030 pounds of freight for up-river points, left Yuma on December 31. Even Liver-

pool Landing has freight destined for that place, and this landing has been almost abandoned for several years.'

"Now that means that 50 years ago that newspaper from Yuma traveled by land over several hundred miles of desert road clear up there to Mineral Park (where Kingman is now) and got there away ahead of the boat. She was slow traveling against that current, especially with such a load, my gran'dad used to tell me.

"You notice there was 727,030 pounds on the boat and the barges. That means 363 tons—pretty big load for a boat on this river. I don't see how they ever made it at all.

"Say, I've been wondering if boats could make that trip so well after Hoover dam is finished. You know a lot of that river water will be accumulating back of the dam to form that lake. River won't have so much water to float boats in below the dam. Be a steady flow you could count on, though.

"Well, its' about time I got home and changed clothes. Time to go on shift in another hour. Where do I work? On the Arizona side of the

canyon—highway excavation for the road that'll cross the dam and go on into Arizona.

"Say, d'ya know, I just wonder what my gran'dad would've thought if he'd known when he was workin' on that boat fifty years ago that his grandson would be helpin' on the job of runnin' a road across the same river up here on a 'bridge' that'll cost fifty million dollars!

"Times 've sure changed since those gold minin' days of Mineral Park and Eldorado canyon!"

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