

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

DREDGIN' GOLD FROM THE COLORADO

"Ought to get some pans and make tests here in the bottom of the river when they get all the water diverted an' start digging down below the river bed in Black canyon."

A young Hoover dam jackhammer man, bare to the waist, and sweating in the hot summer sun in the midst of the dam project workings, was addressing an old time mining man last summer, before diversion of the river.

"Young feller, there might be gold there all right—most sure to be, in fact. But d'you think you're the first 'un to get the idear of goin' after gold in the bed of the Colorado in these here parts? Hmmm."

"No, I don't suppose so." Looking out across the swirling dark waters of the stream. "Probably there've been men with the idea, but did any of them ever make a try at GETTING any of the gold? THAT'S the question."

"Well," with a wise grin spreading across his tanned, seamed, be-whiskered face, "just you better ask ol' Frank Buol if anyone ever attempted it."

"Say, young feller, wait'll I tell you about the contraption Buol found down on the river near Eldorado canyon. D'you know Buol was the first assessor in Clark county, an' that he hadda appraise the value of a \$200,000 outfit for dredgin' gold out of the Colorado river way back in 1910—nearly a quarter century ago?"

"Buol lives at Pahrump now, out beyond Charleston mountain. In them days though he went around afoot an' assessed all over the county. There was some minin' properties them days that took some assessin', too. But this'n was the funniest he ever ran across, he told me onct."

"Hiked down Eldorado canyon (that's only about 30 miles from Boulder City, downstream, y'know), an' when he got down to the river he found this old dredger. It was a sort of scow, all outfitted with machinery 'n everything. Had living quarters aboard her an' everything for comfort in workin' and fer restin' as well."

"The ol' scow was about 150 foot long, an' had a cabin an' decks, n' everything."

"Well, Buol looked over the ol' boat, but he didn't get far with

appraisin' 'er, or gettin' any tax money out of 'er. He asked the minin' men in the canyon about 'er an' found out enough to know just about how far he'd get collectin' taxes.

"There she was, listed on 'er side on the bank an' deserted. Nobody wanted 'er for anything. Y'see in 1909 some rich South Dakota chump or other got strung along by some ambitious promoter, like some of those English concerns got strung along in the early days when minin' had old-fashioned racketeers that knew how to do their minin' far away, among moneyed men that wanted to make a fortune quick in the minin' business."

"An' this promoter convinced 'm they really was gold there, which they was. An' the guy with the money thought this feller's idea was goin' to make a millionaire out of him quick. But the dredger wouldn't work, on account of they was too many boulders in the bottom of the river, an' what they dredged up couldn't be worked very well. They built 'er from materials hauled in from Chloride, Arizona, an' the company had an office in Searchlight. But havin' the office in Searchlight never seemed to make the dredged work like they thought it would. So Buol hiked down there some time after they'd give up, an' he found the Piute

Indians camped in the neighborhood usin' the nice pillows from the gold-dredgin' palace to park their flea-bitten hounds on. Promoters didn't even take the furniture along when they skipped out. Yeah, I'll tell y', young feller, minin' in the bed of the Colorado's been tried before!"